ABLE-TOGETHER *Magazine*

SUMMER 1999, Volume 6, Number 3

US$5 / UK£3.50 / C$7.50 / A$8 / NZ$9

Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA
#1003842

for a recital of music by

Beethoven, Liszt & Chopin

TO BENEFIT

ABLE-TOGETHER Inc & AXIS Dance Company

Sunday October 3rd at 5:00pm

First Unitarian Universalist Church

Franklin St reet at Geary, San Francisco

Tickets: (415) 621-7797

co-sponsored by Men's Associate Exchange

A-T BOARD UPDATE
FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE GARRICK OHLSSON BENEFIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Our joint committee of board members of ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc. and AXIS Dance Company has been meeting since January to plan A-T's first fundraiser, a recital by internationally celebrated pianist Garrick Ohlsson on October 3rd at 5 pm at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in San Francisco.

Only 600 seats will be available. Since Mr. Ohlsson's recent solo appearance at the 2800-seat Davies Symphony Hall was sold-out, we recommend early reservations. Ticket prices are $45, $35 student and fixed income. One hundred tickets for the recital followed by a catered reception to meet Garrick Ohlsson will be available at $75.

For reservations, call Community Box Office at Theater Artaud (415) 621-7797. For updated news about this event, including recital program information, check the special benefit web page at:

http://www.axisdance.org/garrick-recital.html

Our publicity endeavors—on television, on radio, and in print—are raising awareness of our two organizations. Response from the community has been encouraging and includes event co-sponsorship by MAX (Men's Associate Exchange).

Everything has to be planned down to the last detail and within a tight budget. We are looking for volunteers to act as ushers, and for donors of food and beverages for the reception: please call me (415-621-2938) if you can help.

See you on October 3rd!

—Michael Perreault

ABLE TOGETHER

SUMMER 1999, Volume 6, Number 3

EDITOR
Bob Guter
GAYEDIT@aol.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Gordon Elkins
Chris Hewitt
Danny Kodmur
Steven Sickles

A-T MAGAZINE
is published by
ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc.,
a California public benefit corporation exempt from federal taxes under Section 501 (c) 3

Blaine Waterman, *President*
Steven Sklar, *Vice-President*
Mike Maurillo, *Secretary*
Michael Perreault, *Treasurer*
Peter Geiger, *Executive Director*

Advisory Board
John Killacky
Lynn Luckow
Tom Metz

ABLE-TOGETHER
P. O. Box 460053
San Francisco
CA 94146 USA

VOICE MAIL/US: 415 522 9091
VOICE MAIL/UK: 01453 832782
EMAIL: ABLTOGETHR@aol.com
INTERNET:
http://www.well.com/~blaine/abletog.html

© ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc., 1999

ABLE TOGETHER

from the EDITOR

PRESENTATION. That's what the features in this issue address: How we see ourselves, how we set ourselves before others in the public arena and in one-on-one encounters.

Self presentation is not a new theme in the pages of *Able-Together*, but as we've learned, it's a theme that lends itself to limitless variations. In this issue's centerpiece essay, *Under the Spotlight,* author Danny Kodmur examines how the combination of disability and depression can force a stranglehold on ambition, achievement, even the simplest experiences of everyday life. Being *disabled* and depressed is a special subset of ordinary depression, he concludes. One thing Danny seems to be saying is that if we understand the trap we can so easily fall into, climbing out of that trap may become easier. If we know where to look for help in the form of mutual support, it might become easier still. I agree. See what you think.

One way to counter negative self-presentation is by actively redefinition how we'd like the world to see us—even if it's only part-time. This is a trick that Gordon Elkins has pulled off with great panache. In *Nasty Habits* he introduces us to Sister Anal Receptive, his glamorous and successful alter-ego, the nun we'd all like to do some heavy petting with. But transformations of this kind are not all tits and feathers, as they say. Finding a comfortable habit— your own individual drag— entails hard work. Gordon reflects on how "having something to offer," a life of fervid volunteerism in his case, helped him to feel good about himself when his polio-compromised body threatened to make him feel bad about himself. Are we seeing a strategy emerge here? One way to break the connection between disability and depression?

It all depends. The question of how and why some of us manage to defeat depression at least some of the time, while others barely keep afloat most of the time remains, for me, one of life's deeper mysteries. In his tender memoir, titled *Moonlight Sonata*, Chris Hewitt writes about a friend, a kind of romance and, ultimately, a kind of defeat that remains one of the more frightening aspects of living a life

with disability. Chris does not set out to write about depression, but as he wonders about the trajectory of his friend's life, depression figures in his musings, at least implicitly.

In his own experience as a disabled gay man and an artist, Chris Hewitt finds unlimited opportunities to say "Yes." One of the things I love about Chris's poetry is precisely that yea-saying ability, which enables him to transmute life into art in countless ways. I'm not talking about mindless affirmation of the Sunday School variety, either. To see what I do mean, read *Chicken Soup* in this issue and *The Lifting Team* in the Spring issue, two poems in radically different moods. What they have in common is what I think of as the Wow Factor when I read a poem that delights me—the ability to make me see and feel life afresh. I suspect that Chris's accomplishments as a poet may constitute one of his own strategies for breaking the disability/depression connector.

Self-presentation. Sometimes it's as simple (!) as how we react to what we see in the mirror. If you recall my last editorial, you'll remember my reflections about precisely that, brought into sharp focus by an invitation to pose, without wooden legs or clothes, for a book of male nudes. I asked for your advice. You did not disappoint me. Some of you related your own positive experiences in similar circumstances, all of you were upbeat and encouraging. Thanks for your support. It's one of the things that helped me to say "Yes." The photo session was fun. I really had a blast. But I haven't seen the prints yet. So: To be continued.

—Bob Guter

IN THIS ISSUE

FIRST PERSON *page 6*
Let's face it, you're depressed
Danny Kodmur's analysis

Illustration *page 9*
by **Steven Sickles**

INTERVIEW *page 12*
Gordon Elkins doesn't sing, but otherwise he's the perfect nun

MEMOIR *page 18*
First Love in rehab.
Chris Hewitt's poignant memories with musical accompaniment

POEM *page 22*
by **Chris Hewitt**

DEPARTMENTS

EDITORIAL *page 4*

BACK TALK *page 26*

BULLETIN BOARDS
Notices *page 50*
Groups & Links *page 51*

CONTACT ADS
Guide *page 29*
Ad List *page 30*

ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc.

UPDATE *page 3*
Michael Perreault's plans for the Big Event

NEWSMAKING *page 24*

YOU ARE WANTED!

THE RECITAL *page 2*

CAFE A-T *page 25*

UNDER THE *spotlight*

Danny Kodmur

Why is it that disability and depression often go hand-in-hand? For some of us the pressure of other people's expectations combines with our own desire to excel until our physical and emotional capacities overload. We feel prodded and scrutinized—under the spotlight. Can we stop whispering about this dirty little secret and start talking out loud?

For days or even weeks, I didn't leave my apartment. I ate little, and slept even less. I dropped from sight so completely that only a few people took the time and energy to follow me where I was going. I told people I was sad, but the despair was something deeper. Serious clinical depression had come for an extended visit, bringing with it a paralysis greater than anything cerebral palsy could throw at me.

The internal voices I engaged in constant dialogue made the situation worse. "You pathetic loser," they told me, "you're nothing but a drama queen. You have been spoiled with love, financial support, and access to the best education. What have you got to be depressed about?" When I was being this self-critical, I would grow even more depressed, convinced I was ruining my life and letting down my friends, my family, and an entire community which had a great deal invested in my success. For years I had convinced myself that failure was unacceptable, that burnout happened to others but not to me. I was wrong. I encountered failures in some major areas of my life, and after fighting and struggling my whole life, I folded, gave up, gave in to utter helplessness. I hated myself, not only for being unworthy of even being depressed, but also for committing the great American crime: showing any feeling other than sunny optimism.

My public persona has always shown little evidence of the turmoil I keep in check. When people see me zipping down the sidewalk in my sporty blue electric wheelchair, they often notice a smile on my face. They might even hear me singing as I navigate the streets of the city. Seeing me might bring a smile to the face of some able-bodied observer; after all, here I am, pressing forward, not letting anything or anyone get me down, a genuinely happy force of nature.

On my good days, this is more than just the self I present to the world. It is the self I present to myself, the best, most positive, most authentic Danny I believe exists . Much of the time over the last several years however, I have felt distanced and detached from this extroverted me. Then it feels fake, more of a myth for public consumption, as if the wheelchair I use for mobility were a more high-profile vehicle, like a parade float or a Sherman tank. I have felt like an object, something under the constant glare of an invisible spotlight.

Along with many disabled people and those of other minorities, I've always been conscious of living two lives, my own, and the life I lead as a symbol in the eyes, hearts, and hopes of others.

Because of an accident of history, I have been not merely an individual leading my own life, but the embodiment of pioneer barrier-shattering, a kind of disabled Jackie Robinson in miniature. I was one of the first students to be mainstreamed in my school district, and my life story so far could easily be written as a procession of Firsts. You would think that such a progression would grant me a growing sense of confidence. Instead all it did was raise the stakes for the next struggle. I was always conscious that I was more than just myself; I was Disabled People.

The adults around me were supportive, but they often increased the pressure without meaning to. One parent of a disabled child I knew wrote encouraging predictions about my future on my cast after one of my surgeries; years later, after two friends from my special education school had died, one of their moms told me it was up to me to carry their spirits with me through life, up to me to succeed since they were no longer around to succeed for themselves.

For me, this was life under the spotlight, with Danny being cheered and prodded by a caring

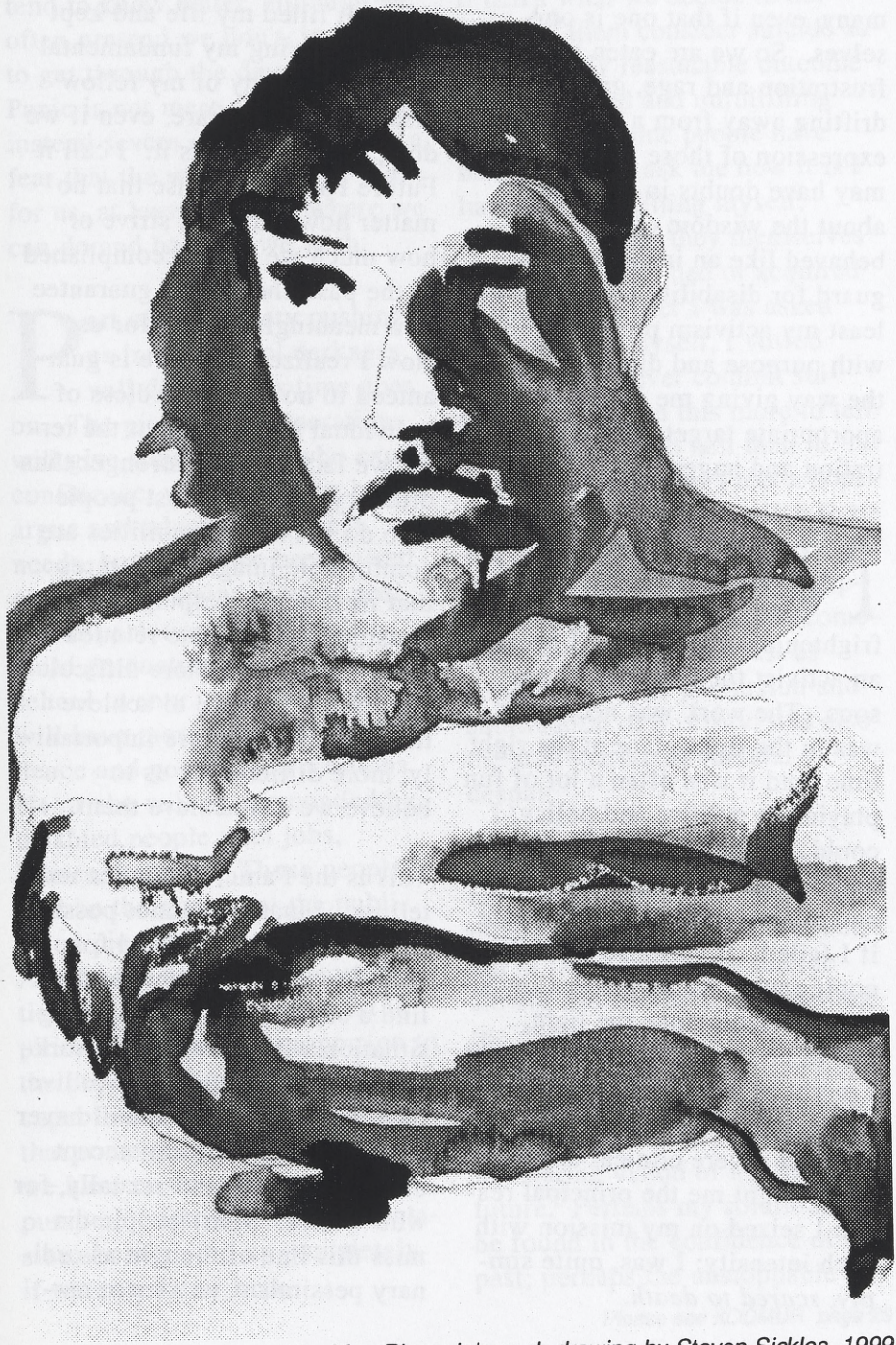
yet demanding audience. If I went to law school, I would of course be a great crusader for disability rights; if I went to graduate school, I would naturally become a famous historian. Anything less would be a waste, of both my talents and the energy and expectations poured into me by others. It wasn't that I was unaware of the possibility of failure, more that I always considered failure to be a temporary setback. The thought of a cycle of failure never occurred to me, so when I found myself stuck in a graduate school program that wasn't working for me, I had no idea what to do.

I was not raised to be a quitter. This attitude bred strength of character, but it also made me a prime candidate for bitterness, since I tended to stick with things when common sense would have told me to find a way out. Sometimes quitting is the best choice, but to me it felt like a confession of failure. I was afraid to be a failure, afraid to vent the anger I felt, both toward the world and toward myself.

The two main stereotypes with which we must always contend are those of the saintly, persevering indomitable optimist, and the bitter, hostile cripple who blames the world for his problems and is incapable of being happy. I think we are often so afraid of fulfilling the negative stereotype that we fraudulently project ourselves as optimists. That is why people like me are seen as courageous, plucky, spunky, people who endure what able-bodied people assume is unendurable, doing so with smiles and determination, and remarkably little bitterness. This is how others see me, but it is often how I wish to be seen, since the alternative is so frightening.

I feel ambivalent about such personal choices. Like Lou Grant on the old Mary Tyler Moore show, I hate spunkiness. I submit that most of us disabled people adopt the smiling public face to control and sublimate our anger and disappointment; however, such sublimation exacts a high price. Where does anger go when we are told all our lives that expressing it makes us unpleasant people, that giving voice to it will lose us the good will and support of the able-bodied world?

Since we often recognize that our anger will hurt too many others if turned outward, we keep it inside, turned on ourselves. We become seriously depressed, concluding via some twisted inter-



BlueMan Blues, ink wash drawing by Steven Sickles, 1999

personal algebra that it is better to hurt one person than to hurt many, even if that one is ourselves. So we are eaten up by frustration and rage, gradually drifting away from a healthy expression of those feelings . I may have doubts in retrospect about the wisdom of having behaved like an invading vanguard for disability rights, but at least my activism provided me with purpose and direction, along the way giving me plenty of appropriate targets for my frustration and anger.

Now that sure fixity of mission has evaporated, and I am left with a frightening realization. I became an activist for a variety of reasons. The work was necessary, I was in the right place at the right time, and it was often a lot of fun playing at politics and policy; I could be lauded when successful, and I could feel like a righteous and misunderstood Don Quixote if I failed. It was also my way of coping with the permanent invisible spotlight; since the light would be there anyway, I thought I might as well create something worth watching. But several years of severe clinical depressed have taught me the principal reason I seized on my mission with such intensity: I was, quite simply, *scared to death.*

Activism meant an endless succession of tasks, battles, and enemies. It filled my life and kept me from facing my fundamental fear, a fear many of my fellow disabled people share, even if we don't or can't discuss it. I call it Future Panic, the sense that no matter how much we strive or how much we have accomplished in the past, there is no guarantee of a meaningful future for us. Now I realize the future is guaranteed to no one, regardless of individual situations, but the terror we face is much stronger than ordinary anxiety. Most people who do not have disabilities are comfortable imagining futures that incorporate employment, housing, and intimate relationships. It is much more difficult for disabled people to achieve these goals, and more importantly, more difficult for us to believe we can achieve them.

This is the Panic, that inner voice telling us that we cannot possibly feel sufficiently qualified for employment, that we will never find a stable accessible housing situation with enough of a working support system for us to live independently, that we will never meet that man who can accept us, romantically and sexually, for who we are. Many people dismiss this line of thought as ordinary pessimism, as a mere nar-

rowness of vision. Able-bodied people, that is. Disabled people tend to know better, although we often pretend we don't, in order to get through the day. Our Panic is not mere pessimism, but instead severe existential crisis, a fear that the world holds no place for us, at least no place where we can do and be what we wish.

Part of the anxiety pushing us into personal darkness will dissipate as time goes on. The pioneering generation will give way to those who exude confidence, who may have had to argue and advocate for their needs, but who have been raised on a healthy foundation of positive expectations. A disabled child graduating from high school twenty years from now will have more than just confidence and positive expectations. He or she will be surrounded by disabled people with jobs, homes, families. Those people will be the norm, not the publicized pioneering barrier breakers. As of now, however, opportunities for disabled people exist in pitiful and insulting proportion to the depths of our needs and our capabilities. It is no wonder then that some of us drift aimlessly if we have no advocacy agenda to pursue. Some of us might fantasize about giving up completely, if we only knew how.

Able-bodied people think they know the way we should give up, if that's what we decide to do. Many of them consider suicide as the perfectly reasonable outcome of a depressed and unfulfilling life; in fact, some people have had the gall to ask me how it is I have avoided killing myself, since that's what they themselves would do if they had or acquired a disability. After I was asked that question myself, I vowed that I would never commit suicide. I promised this more to tell the world to go to hell than to reassure myself that I had a hopeful future. I no more wanted to be the crippled suicide statistic than the bitter hostile nightmare cripple, but ironically I have become something different. Just as depression is the perversion and sublimation of hostility, it is also the sublimation of suicidal despair.

When I am severely depressed, not eating, communicating with others, or leaving my apartment, I am in fact committing suicide slowly and inevitably by inviting the death of hope. Therapy and medication can help restore hope and mitigate despair, but cannot necessarily provide me with a motivating vision of my own future. Perhaps my solutions can be found in the confidence of the past; perhaps the unstoppable

Please see KODMUR page 29

NASTY HABITS

GORDON ELKINS, businessman and community activist, often doffs his pinstripes for the habit of Sister Anal Receptive, one of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc., celebrated for their charitable (and outrageous) endeavors. GORDON talks to BOB GUTER about why he took the veil, how polio influenced his feelings about social activism, and other matters.

BOB: Even before I moved to San Francisco three year ago I was an admirer of The Sisters. I'd like to know how you became Sister Anal Receptive.

GORDON: The Sisters came into my life in a roundabout way. Back in 1990 when I had my own company—we did special events productions—I hired someone to work for us who was a walking dream. Pierre was a French Canadian trapeze artist; it was one of those rare situations where our very differences (he was 14 years younger and had a body to die for) made it possible for us to open different worlds to one another. Somehow I manifested him into my life. I don't know how I did that, but I did. Anyhow, he'd been approached to do some fund-raising events with the Sisters. One involved a gallery opening to celebrate a series of large paintings an artist had done of all The Sisters. Pierre did a trapeze show as part of the opening. Soon after that he became a Sister himself, so I started going to meetings just to spend time with him. Finally one of the founders, Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch, said to me, "You attend more of our meetings than our regular members, Gordon. Does this mean you want to join The Sisters?"

B: And you were a Sister, just like that?

G: Oh no! It's all very structured. You first become a postulant and then a novice. As it happened, I became a novice at a time when The Sisters' books were in the red. Two of us novices were put in charge of a fund-raising booth at the Folsom Street Fair. To everybody's surprise, we raised $1,100. Well, at the very next meeting we were elevated to fully professed members and that same evening I was elected treasurer! At about the same time The Sisters took over

Halloween. That year we had a gate of about $36,000! I was intent on our being squeaky clean financially, so when I took the books to our accountant he was stupefied, because for the first time every penny was accounted for! I guess that was my road to the presidency, which is where I ended up for a while. That's a *very* short summary of my career as a Sister.

B: We could devote this whole interview to just that part of your life, but one last question: What event are you fondest of today?

G: Probably the children's Halloween we stage with Cliff's Hardware. We bring in the San Francisco School of Circus Arts to perform for the kids and we have a costume parade just like in the old days.

B: You stage a celebration for children? You dangerous homosexuals!

G: The parents who bring their kids love The Sisters. They're not afraid of us—parents *or* kids.

B: It's nearly a decade since you met Pierre and took the veil. Two life-altering events?

G: Yes. Lots of changes. Pierre was HIV+. Back then there were no cocktails, so I pretty much knew what would happen. I took care of him until he died and the time we spent together was magical.

B: Pierre and The Sisters. Two different kinds of magic . . .

G: That's right. Some of it was wild and funny. Pierre also performed at the Campus Theater, where he was really, really popular. All of his groupies would wait for him to come out after a show and I'd play the wallflower over by the door. He was good to his fans, but at some point he'd always announce, "Well, I gotta go," then he'd burst thru the doors, I'd hop on the back of his motorcycle and off we'd go into the night, while all the groupies stood there wondering "Who the hell is *HE*?!"

Because Pierre was such a talented acrobat (he trained at le Cirque du Soleil), instead of entering down the aisles like the other performers did he'd balance seat-arm to seat-arm over people's heads—quite the act. One night when I was sitting way in the back he was crouching over me jerking off to the appreciation of the crowd; what they didn't know was that he was whispering in my ear, " I can't wait to get out of here. These are the cheapest bastards tonight, nobody's tipping. Where are we going to dinner?"

B: Sounds like you two were a fabulous team.

G: Oh, you can't imagine! The stuff we did at the theater was incredible. Here's a real Secret of the Porn Stars: Pierre did an

act downstairs, too, in what they called the Arena. He had a natural talent for getting everyone involved, with great come-on lines like, "I'm not just here for your pleasure, come down here and pleasure me, too." Of course everybody was too shy to move, so on nights when I was there I was the shill. I'd lean against a pillar across from Pierre and pull it out and start jerking. There I was having an intimate encounter with my own personal porn star in the middle of this public place. Finally he would say, "I'm *not* coming first." I'd climax, everybody else would blow in a great shower, and Pierre and I could get out of there to our dinner or movie.

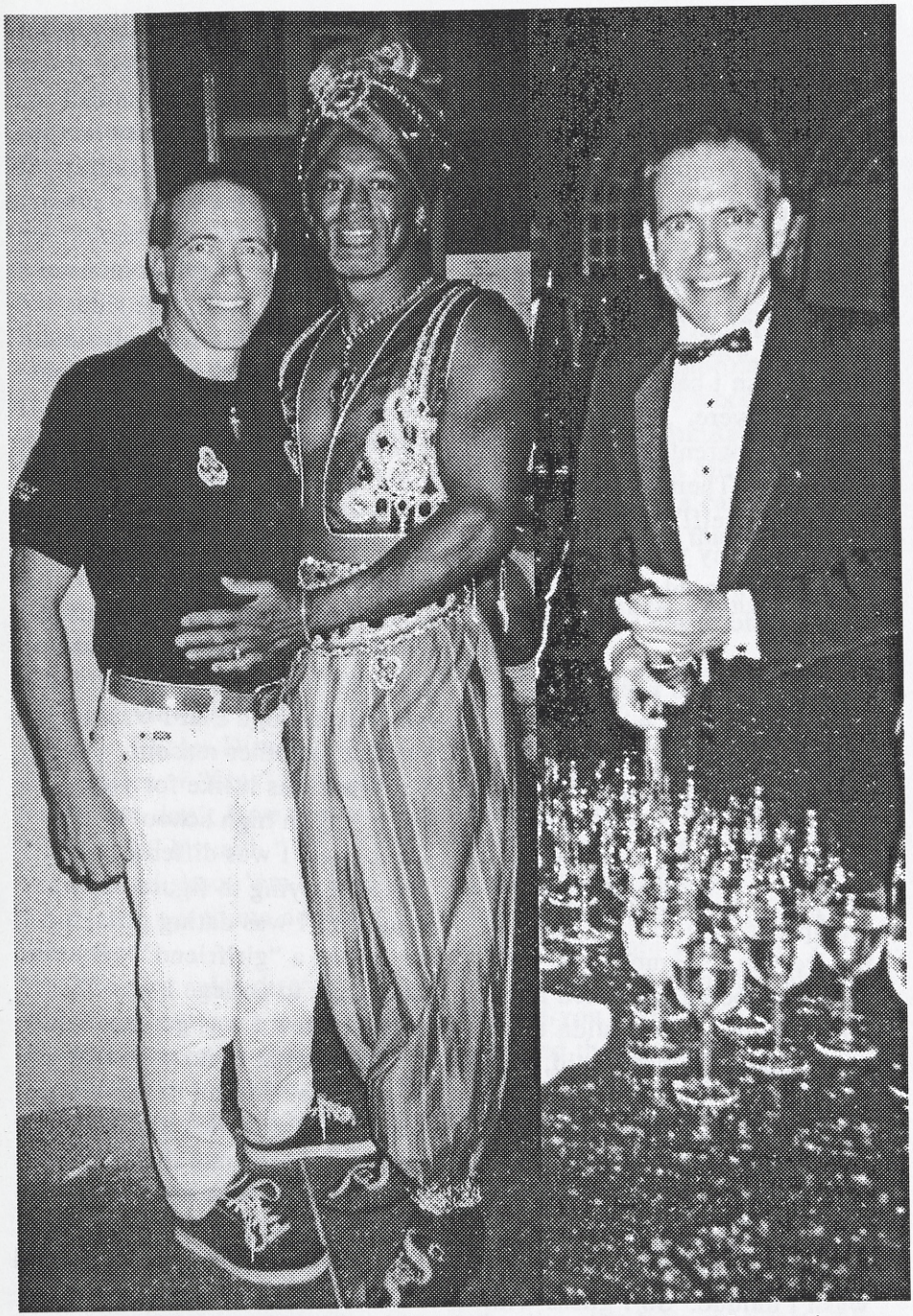
B: There you were, doing this incredible performance sexually, framed by this incredible relationship—the complexities of it are unbelievable. Was that easy for you to do.

G: The sexual part? I think I was always a closet exhibitionist; Pierre brought that out in me. I've always been an organizational junkie, too, so when Pierre brought me into contact with The Sisters he helped me fulfill that other need. When you're shy, and I am, really, organizations, especially "helping" organizations, can be a way to socialize, bypass your wallflower identity. I know that there's a deep connection to my disability, too. I grew up feeling less attractive because of polio. Having something to give made me feel better about myself.

B: How has your life been different since Pierre died?

G: For one thing, I haven't really dated anyone since then. I believe that Pierre and I were soulmates. At one point early on I just knew that I would be the one to be with him to the end. Once, not long before he died, he looked at me intently and said, "I don't know why, but in the last couple of weeks I've had so much love for you." We just grew closer and closer. My role was to help him prepare spiritually for his transition, because he was not a spiritual person at all. At one point he talked about suicide, and that always remained an option, but as he got sicker he came to a greater sense of peace. He was was accepting at the end. And for me, well I discovered what it was like to be with someone in that very spiritual, actually magical soulmate place where you give and receive without boundaries.

B: I know that in the years since Pierre's death your life has changed in other ways, because of post-Polio syndrome. Tell me how polio affected your early years, so I can understand what's going on now.



Gordon with "The Sultan of Malacca," his proudest PR creation, and Gordon in a celebratory mood.

(COVER PHOTO BY Eric Orvid)

G: I contracted polio six months before the Salk vaccine was available! It was being tested on the East Coast and we lived in the middle of Oklahoma. I was lucky in two ways, though. It affected only my left leg, and because my father had had polio when he was nineteen, my parents knew what they were getting into. I wasn't catered to the way some kids were. I still remember calling my parents to get me something. Their response was, "Get it yourself!" So I'd haul myself into my wheelchair and get what I wanted.

B: How did things work out at school?

G: I was able to keep up during regular class time with a two-way radio hookup; after school a teacher came to tutor me for things I couldn't see on the blackboard. I got polio in the Fall and was back at school in the Spring, in a full leg brace.

B: Do you remember how you felt about being separated from your friends? You couldn't go out to play and they could, things like that?

G: I adjusted because my parents never allowed me to think of myself as "handicapped." Also, there'd been such an epidemic of polio in Oklahoma City that I wasn't unique. So I guess with some limitations I made friends like everybody else. I wasn't part of the Jock Crowd, obviously, but I recall *watching* the jocks. There was a boy named Richard Gresham who was on the football team and the wrestling team and God, did I have a crush on him! He had such a body. Before they were stylish he used to wear shorts slit up the side. He'd go out on the football field on his lunch hour to exercise and I'd go watch. I think my being disabled let me watch without it looking strange.

B: It sounds as if one "differentness," disability, protected you from being attacked for your other, even more deviant "differentness," your sexual orientation.

G: That's true. Being disabled was odd enough that I was not suspect for other reasons.

B: What was it like for you being gay in high school?

G: I knew I was different but I was still trying to figure out what it meant. I was dating girls, but I never had a "girlfriend." By the time I got to college I was miserable. I knew I was gay but I didn't know what to do with that knowledge. Living in Oklahoma, I thought I was the only one! Fortunately for me, the Assistant Dean of Men took an interest in me; I would study at his place. He was gay—everybody gossiped about him but everybody loved him. He was a savior for me; he validated me because he cared

about me. I remember how miserable I was on Saturday nights, but I think that's when the groundwork was laid for my devotion to volunteer work, the feeling I mentioned earlier about being less self-conscious if you have something to offer. Since I had no social life, I began to get involved in working for my fraternity To this day they have a Gordon Elkins Service Award. I wonder sometimes if I went back and came out of the closet *there* if they'd still give the award.

B: They'd damn well better!

G: Well, remember, it's still Oklahoma. When I got out of school I worked for a while with a younger fraternity brother. He was interviewing someone for the job of Sales Director when the subject of "fags" came up. "Well, we don't *have* fags in Oklahoma,' he said. "We just line 'em up and shoot 'em." Guess who came out to me not long after that?

B: The new sales director.

G: Of course!

B: How were you managing physically in the years before the post-Polio syndrome hit?

G: Through my freshman year in college I used a full leg brace; I had two pair of shoes, a black pair and a brown pair—a real fashion statement! When I was younger I had such little usable muscle below the knee that they kept the knee well forward because I had no natural "back knee" control. During college vacation one summer a surgeon cut the bone below my knee, turned my foot around straight again and reattached the bone with a pin. Now I do without the full-leg brace, but I've got to be careful; a dip or a rough spot can send me into an impromptu dance routine—or worse. These days I know my limitations, but it irritates the hell out of me. Now I walk with a cane; without it I can't do more than two blocks.

B: How do these changes make you feel?

G: I feel a lot of anger and frustration lately. And it's tough to know where to put the anger. Sometimes I just have to vent. Slowing down is bad enough, but even scarier is the sense of progressive deterioration. I just know I'm going to end up in a full brace again some day. A lot of the time I'm in denial about it. But you know what? I've discovered that finding ways around the negative stuff is a challenge I can embrace. Take the Gay Pride Parade, for example. Give it up? You're out of your mind! Instead of walking I've simply engineered things so that now I ride—*in style*! Being the diva that I am, that suits me just fine. ✍

Chris Hewitt at his desk *PHOTO: Richard Kanuck*

MOONLIGHT SONATA

by CHRIS HEWITT

In April Chris Hewitt was one of three *Able-Together* contributors to read from their work at A Different Light Books in San Francisco. Like Chris's last *A-T* piece, *Sticks and Stones, Moonlight Sonata* is excerpted from his forthcoming memoir, *BRITTLE BONES.*

Before going away to university I spent several weeks in a rehabilitation center for people using wheelchairs called the Mary Marlborough Lodge, part of the Nuffield Orthopedic hospital in Oxford. Here I was measured for a new manual wheelchair and provided with a tiny single-passenger, three-wheeled fibreglass car that was thought to be just the thing for disabled drivers (and that nearly got me killed later on when I drove it on a busy motorway). I would need ramps so that I could get around the campus at Birmingham, it was decided, so the dimensions and angles for these were calculated, too.

The Lodge was ahead of its time, with a staff of well-trained, dynamic and forward-thinking physical and occupational therapists. They had a model kitchen with sinks, refrigerators and stoves that could be adjusted to the height you needed. The accommodations were quite unhospital-like. There were two of us in each room. The nurses wore ordinary clothes instead of the starched white caps and aprons of regular nurses then, and they treated us like equals, never talking down to, or patronizing us. They were mostly stunning Scandinavian girls with blonde hair, blue eyes and freckled, tanned skin. I remember thinking that if I hadn't been "different," I would have fallen in love with one of them. Instead I fell for my room-mate Roger.

Roger was a quadriplegic from a tiny hamlet outside Norwich. He was a big burly guy with twinkly grey eyes and a devastating smile. We got into the habit of

talking late at night. The nurses spoiled us by bringing us late-night snacks. These kept us awake till the early morning hours. One night I asked Roger how he became a quad.

Roger was a birdwatcher. One day he was on a birdwatching expedition with a friend. Roger spotted two Cardinals, a rare find in those parts, apparently. He became so excited, he climbed a five-barred gate to get a better look at the birds with his binoculars. The wood of the gate must have been rotten and the gate gave way beneath him, throwing him onto his back on the grass. When he didn't get up right away his friend ran over and yelled at him, "Stop fooling around, you idiot! Get up! Get up!" But Roger had broken his neck. He never walked again. Though paralyzed from the neck down, he could move his hands and arms heavily and with great effort, enough to push a wheelchair with large rubber knobs on the wheel-runs.

It was painful to watch this formerly athletic guy inching his way so slowly forward even across the smooth, level hospital floor. In those days I had full use of both arms and legs and could propel my manual chair at fast walking speed. It made me feel strangely manly. In this way I felt myself Roger's equal physically. I was able to balance his much larger size and potential strength with my speed and agility. I picked things up for him that he had dropped; I sometimes cut his food for him at mealtimes.

I remember he had a special knife with a bow-shaped blade enabling him to rock it to and fro through a piece of food to cut it up, but sometimes it was so painful for me to watch him struggle that I would offer to help. Roger was not angry or resentful about his disability. Perhaps if he had been less passive things would have been better for him. He was the least macho straight man I've ever met. He had the dreamy gentleness of an artist.

Roger had only partial feeling in his upper body. He was the first man I ever touched—deliberately, I mean. I plotted my act; I even rehearsed a tiny script in my head. One afternoon, I found him reading a magazine in the dayroom. It was a hot, sunny day and he wore a short-sleeved shirt. I was attracted by his strong brown arms covered with long, blond hairs. I took a deep breath (if I had been religious I would have prayed) and ran my

finger up and down the length of his left forearm, which was relaxed on the armrest of his chair. "Can you feel me do that?" I asked him, according to the script I'd prepared. "Not really," he replied, giving me a sad half-smile and staring off into the distance. So you could touch a man, a straight man even, and the world didn't collapse around your ears! Roger didn't seem to mind at all, nor did he seem surprised.

I knew my question had prompted him to think about the accident. When he smiled at me of course I wanted to put my head on his shoulder, hug him, tell him I loved him. Instead, I decided to face the truth. I asked him if he had a girlfriend. He told me that he had been engaged at the time of his accident but that his fiancee never came to visit him in the hospital and he never heard from her again. "May she rot in hell," I thought but did not say. I never heard Roger say anything critical about anyone. I asked him if he'd had a girlfriend since the accident. One of the nurses at the rehab he'd been in had proposed to him but he'd turned her down, he said, because he didn't want to be "a burden." "But if she loved you—" I offered. "No," he sighed, "it's better this way."

"But Roger, you'd never be a burden to anyone," I tried again. He shook his head and changed the subject. "Do you like classical music?" "Yes," I answered meekly. I was stunned by his tales of rejection. "How about a little Beethoven?" He pushed over to the record player and dexterously but very slowly and laboriously put the album on the turntable.

Rubinstein!" he said, smiling at me; now I was totally in love. It was the Moonlight Sonata. We sat in silence while the music played—the whole side of the album in fact. Tears welled up in Roger's eyes. Was it the music or the accident, I wondered. I felt so helpless and angry—a whole flood of emotion overtook me. Now I know the feeling I had was one of compassion, of empathy; perhaps he knew I felt this even though I couldn't express it. Somehow, Beethoven did it for us. The music had begun to bond us in a friendship which was to last last for three years.

The slow movement at the beginning of the sonata heightened the sadness I felt over Roger's fate, the rapid movement heightened the anger I felt at Fate which had dealt him such a blow, the terrible irony

that because of his pursuit of the beauty of the birds, life had lost its joy for him.

Later that day I felt immense gratitude for having grown up with a disability rather than having had to suffer one imposed traumatically on me. To me, being tiny, in a wheelchair with a brittle bone condition, was, and still is, normal. I've never known, like Roger, the exhilaration of running across fields in the Spring in search of rare birds. I've been lucky; the "birds" have come to me, alighted on my chair, fed from my hand.

The next day they sent Roger back to his village in a truck with his brand-new wheelchair and his own fibreglass car (he never was to use) in the back. I had a feeling as I waved him goodbye that I would never see him again.

We corresponded faithfully for three years. Gradually I was consumed by my studies and social life at the university. I had not written to him for three months when the news came. Roger's mother wrote to my mother so that my mother could break the news. My mother tearfully read the letter to me. Roger had, like a lot of quads, severe bladder infections. His doctor had decided to perform a kidney bypass operation and catheterize him permanently to try to avoid future infections. Roger had died on the operating table. One sentence in his mother's letter haunts me to this day:" I can't help feeling he just gave up on life." She may have been over-psychologizing her son, but it felt true to me.

I of course felt horribly guilty for having stopped writing to Roger. If only I had told him that I loved him, told him not to give up. Now I see my guilt as a natural part of my grieving, but also the height of arrogance. Possibly the surgeon made an error, or the infection had poisoned him; the whole thing taught me a lesson: for God's sake hold on to your dear friends, keep in touch. It's a cruel world, cruel enough to kill dear Roger, who, in his dense blue-ink handwriting, signed himself in every letter: "Yours, always, Roger."

There have been times in the last three years since my stroke when I've felt like giving up; but Roger is one reason I don't. I feel him hovering about me sometimes, his hand on my shoulder, whispering, "How about a little Beethoven?" ✍

POEM BY CHRIS HEWITT

CHICKEN SOUP

for Allan

I am in bed with a cold.
You stop by with chicken soup:
"This'll do the trick," you say.
And because you feed it to me—
Slowly, spoon by spoon—
It is the best chicken soup in the world.
At the fourth spoon,
a noodle drops down my chin.
As you pick it out of my beard,
I lick your finger.
The next thing I know,
you have put down the soup
and we are kissing furiously.
Then we make love.
Afterwards, as you lie back
panting and laughing,
you wag a finger at me
and pretend to scold:
"Finish your chicken soup!" you say.
But by now I don't have need of it—
I am completely cured! ✍

ABLE-TOGETHER CONTINUES TO EXPAND PROFILE IN GAY, DISABLED AND NONPROFIT COMMUNITIES

▼▼▼▼

Cafe A-T Goes *International* . . .

Yes, it's true: This summer Cafe A-T makes it's European debut on Saturday, August 14 when a group of who-knows-how-many men gathers to celebrate London Cafe A-T from noon until 3:00 at the Rupert Street Cafe Bar in Soho. What's next? Paris, New York, Marrakesh?!

. . . & Changes SF Location

Buddies coffee house, where we've been meeting in SF has changed its identity to an internet cafe, with alterations that make it less easily accessible for guys in wheelchairs. We've moved to bright and airy Dolores Park Cafe. Join us there. If conversation flags (unlikely!) you can always watch the shirtless tennis players across the street in Dolores Park.

▼▼▼▼

New Mobility Reprint

WATCH FOR IT! In September, *New Mobility* magazine will reprint former editor Peter Geiger's *Able-Together* editorial on the subject of "The Crip as Hero Stereotype."

▼▼▼▼

Horizons Grantwriting

San Francisco's Horizons Foundation has notified us that A-T, Inc. is in the running for grant assistance to improve and expand our programs. Stay tuned and stay optimistic.

▼▼▼▼

Getting the WORD Out

Easter Sunday in the Castro, and we were there: Chris Hewitt, Steven Sickles and Blaine Waterman, three of your favorite A-T authors, read their prose and poetry at A Different Light Books to an appreciative audience.

You

are cordially invited to

the *remaining* 1999

ABLE-TOGETHER Cafe Meetings

Cafe A-T San Francisco

Sun Jul 18th at 2pm **Sun Aug 22nd at 2pm**

Sun Sep 19th at 2pm **Sun Oct 24th at 2pm**

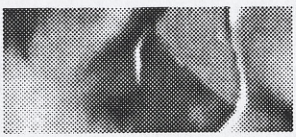
In SF's gay Upper Market, easily reached by BART/MUNI

Cafe A-T London

Saturday August 14th at 12noon

In London's gay Soho, close to Piccadilly Circus

Join a bunch of good men like you
Friendly, w'chair accessible location

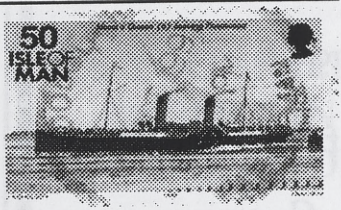


BE SEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME
WITH OTHER DISABLED/NONDISABLED MEN!!

ABLE-TOGETHER
POB 460053, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146, USA
***RSVP to:** Voice Mail—US: 415 522 9091
***RSVP to:** Voice Mail—UK: 01453 832782
***RSVP to:** e-mail: ABLTOGETHR@aol.com

*dates and venues subject to confirmation: please leave your telephone number on the voice-mail so we can call you back

BACK TALK



LETTERS
VOICE-MAIL
E-MAIL

ABLE-TOGETHER may print extracts from your communications, identified by your initials and state, unless you specifically ask us not to

HOW TO REACH US

E-MAIL:
ABLTOGETHR@aol.com
VOICE MAIL/US:
415 522 9091
VOICE MAIL/UK:
01453 832782
LETTER POST:
ABLE-TOGETHER
P. O. Box 460053
San Francisco
CA 94146 USA

WORLDWIDE INTEREST

I continue to find your magazine informative and supportive. Despite the enormous distance between Australia and the US many of the issues confronting us are very similar. Disgaytalk tackles a number of these problems we all face and gives us an opportunity to interact and express our views. The problems don't disappear but you realize you are not the only one facing these life challenges. Again, many thanks.

HH, Australia

I just received my first copy of *A-T Magazine* and I think it's great. I'm already looking forward to the next issue.

BL, England

Very Thank You for the beautiful interview in your Winter issue. Really you have a lot of sensibility for us and the interview is very lovely. I thank you from my heart. I am a 45-year-old deaf, lawyer with profound interest in the rights of the handicapped and I would like to know more about this field. I believe that you are ahead of your time and your work is unique. I send you today a check for a yearly subscription and a great salute from your Honduran friend.

MEC, Honduras

Guys: It's especially gratifying to know how much Able-Together *means to men in so many far-flung places. Your letters inspire us to keep doing our best. We rely on you to let us know what's useful, enlightening, and moving in these pages and how we can serve you better.*

Thanks, and keep writing!

ABLE-TOGETHER, POB 460053, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146, USA
Voicemail US: 415–522 9091/email: ABLTOGETHR@aol.com/Voicemail UK: 01453 832782

ABLE-TOGETHER ***Magazine***, an international quarterly for bisexual and gay men with and without disabilities, is published by *ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc.*, a California public benefit corporation exempt from federal taxes under IRS Section 501(c)3. Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall issues appear in January, April, July and October. **A-T** ***Magazine*** has subscribers in the US, and in Canada, the UK, and across the globe. You can buy the ***Magazine*** at certain gay/progressive bookstores in the US and in the UK.

ABLE-TOGETHER ***Magazine***, is edited by Bob Guter, an amputee since age six; Bob's inquiry looks at the interface of disability and nondisability from *both* viewpoints, and seeks to bridge the gaps which our socialization has created from a perspective emphasizing the generation of positive feeling and experience in men's relationships.

A-T ***Magazine's*** fifty-two page *Summer 1999* issue looks at disability, self-presentation and depression; an interview with one of San Francisco's Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is featured, along with readers' letters and email, and nineteen pages of subscribers' personal contact ads are listed. **A-T** ***Magazine*** IS its subscribers—who contribute articles, poems, interviews, bulletin-board notices, letters and art to the ***Magazine***, and help with outreach locally.

A-T ***Magazine*** applies all subscription, sales and donation revenues to production, advertising and outreach costs. ABLE-TOGETHER's international outreach program includes sending informational materials and flyers to independent living centers and to the disabled students' programs and the gay and lesbian students' associations of colleges in the US and Canada; A-T has advertised in US regional gay newspapers and nationally in publications such as *New Mobility, The Disability Rag* and *Advocate Classifieds;* in Canada in *Disability Today;* and in the newsletter of the Spinal Injuries Association and in *Disability Now* and *Gay Times* in the UK. A-T's home on the Internet is: **http://www.well.com/~blaine/abletog.html**

A-T ***Magazine*** yearly subscribers *only* may submit a personal contact ad for publication for as long as the subscription is active; changes and updates to ads are encouraged; ads may be box#-coded for privacy; **A-T** ***Magazine*** does not profit from forwarding replies to coded ads, but we ask that responders reimburse our forwarding postage costs; we reserve the right to edit ads for length and content.

A-T ***Magazine*** costs **$30US/£18.50/C$42.50/A$44.50/NZ$53.50** (full-rate subscribers may pay by your personal check drawn in your domestic currency) for a year's subscription of four issues, inclusive of a personal contact ad listing at no additional charge; for men with low income this is reduced to **$15US** (US $ only, please) or **$20US** if you send us a photo to be scanned and published with your ad; or you may purchase a single issue for **$5US** (US $ only, please). **A-T** ***Magazine*** goes by airmail to overseas subscribers.

A-T ***Magazine*** is news: A-T has received mention in *New Mobility*, in the newsletters of the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights and of the Boston Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities, as well as in gay newspapers and magazines such as *Mandate*, and, locally, the *San Francisco Bay Area Reporter* and *All Points North* in the UK. Organizational subscribers include the World Institute on Disability in Oakland, California, the Homodok Archives in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society in San Francisco, Ca.

SUBSCRIPTION AND PERSONAL CONTACT AD REQUEST INFORMATION

When you decide to become a full-year subscriber to A-T you have a choice of starting your subscription with either the **currently available** issue or the **next** issue. Because your ad (if you submit one) will only be published whilst your subscription is active, **this choice affects the number of times your ad can appear!** *This means that if you want your ad to be published four times during your first year with A-T you must specify that you want your subscription to start with the **next** issue and your subscription payment and ad must be received by us **before** the deadline.*

DEADLINES: ABLE-TOGETHER needs your ad copy by **5th September for Fall issue, 5th December for Winter issue, 5th March for Spring issue, and 5th June for Summer issue, .** New, renewed or changed ads reaching us after these dates are not guaranteed to appear in the issue published the following month. We will try, but...

UPGRADE OPTION: If you buy a single copy of the current issue of A-T for **$5US** you may upgrade to a full-year subscription by payment (within three months) of the balance of **$25US/£15/C$35.50/A$37/NZ$44** (full subscribers), or **$10US**—low income (US $ only, please); an upgrade form will be sent to you with your first A-T.

----------to

ABLE-TOGETHER, POB 460053, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146, USA

- PERSONAL CONTACT AD REQUEST FORM -

PLEASE PUBLISH THE FOLLOWING AD WHILE MY SUBSCRIPTION REMAINS ACTIVE:

*Signed*_____*Date*_____

I would like my ad to be: ___box#-coded ___uncoded *(please check one)*
(we recommend your ad be box#-coded unless you have a P O Box address)

Text of my ad: *(include name/address/phone # **as you want it to appear in the ad**)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____*(attach separate sheet if necessary)*

----------to

ABLE-TOGETHER, POB 460053, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146, USA

- SUBSCRIPTION /ORDER FORM -

Name:_____*Date*_____

Address:_____

_____**Phone #:**_____

____I would like a FULL-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION *(inclusive of personal ad)*

starting with____the current issue / the next_____issue *(specify issue date)*

I enclose _____$30US/ £18.50/ C$42.50/ A$44.50/ NZ$53.50, or _____$15US low income, or _____$20US with photo to scan

_____Please send me a SINGLE ISSUE of the newsletter;_____I enclose$5US

(please check as applicable)

BREAKING NEW GROUND

My name is Edward Tarletski. I am the head of the first and only organization for freedom of Gays and Lesbians of the Republic of Belarus [Byelorussian Republic in the former Soviet Union], the Belarus Lambda League. Our league as well as the gay movement of our country is very young (founded in July 1998). At this first stage of our work our main objective is education. We want to help Gays and Lesbians understand themselves better and we are telling others about gay people to increase social tolerance. The main tool we use to achieve these objectives is our review, *Forum Lambda*, the only gay magazine in our republic. We are also creating a library for gay people. We've already got some books and a dozen magazines for it. We are looking for partner organizations around the world and would be grateful for any new or old gay magazines and books for our library. You can reach us at: BLL, P.O. Box 23, 220006, Minsk, Belarus; lambdaby@mailcity.com.

Edward: Your pioneering work is important to all of us. We are sending a package of back issuesof A-T for the BLL library and hope that our readers will contact you to see what books and other materials they might contribute.

WAITING FOR AN ANSWER

I have been a subscriber from the Bronx since 1995 and have yet to receive an answer from an advertiser. Are there any handicapped guys from my borough or am I the only disabled man there under the age of fifty? I have Cerebral Palsy. From the letters you print I am under the impression that many people have gotten together. Is it possible that the men who have connected are non-handicapped and are using *Able-Together* to meet like-minded men?

DD, New York

Thank you for keeping up with subscription renewals even in the face of discouraging experience of the A-T personals. We certainly do not think that nondisabled men are using these pages to meet each other. We're sorry you haven't had better luck finding a buddy or boyfriend through A-T. Look out for an article on maximizing your personals chances in a forthcoming issue of the magazine. Meanwhile we suggest you try not to restrict your interest to men under 50 and in your Borough. Though some fare better, you are not alone: for another view of the problem, read the following letter from a fellow New Yorker.

WHO WANTS TO KNOW YOU?

Your new issue of *A-T* arrives. You read the articles, but more importantly, you read the ads and WOW!!! It hits you. A real hot ad and one that's a perfect match for your interest. Soooo, you take out your pen, paper, typewriter, word processor—whatever you use—and reply.

You wait. You wait and wait and then you wait some more. After four weeks or so you wonder if he ever did get the message, he may have lost your address, misplaced the correspondence. So you try again. And you wait and wait and wait until you just give up and forget about it.

Has this ever happened to you? Of course it has, and to just about everyone who has ever answered a personals ad. Keep that experience in mind when someone answers YOUR ad and *write back!* Acknowledge the inquiry even if you're not interested. A simple note, postcard, or letter stating that you did get the correspondence but aren't interested at the present time or you feel that things wouldn't work out, but "thanks for writing," will do the trick.

NOT RESPONDING IS NOT ONLY DAMN RUDE, IT SAYS A LOT ABOUT YOU AS A PERSON. If this is how you treat people, who wants to know you? Why did you bother placing an ad? Don't you have anything better to do with your time and money?

You know that *A-T* is unique. It's a publication for *us.* Don't we owe one another more respect? And the same thing goes for phone calls. If you ask a subscriber to call you, make sure you return the call. There is nothing so cowardly as hiding behind an answering machine. Someone has taken the time and money to call you. Call him back.

And to those members who have connected, don't bad-mouth others, as in,"Forget A-T #999, he's weird and off the wall." What doesn't work out for you may be complete heaven for someone else. And besides, aren't you old enough to make your own decisions?

HR, New York

As you have seen overleaf we've heard similar complaints before: your letter really lays it on the line. We appreciate your interest in viewing the problem from many sides, including the perspective of doing right by the whole of the movement that is Able-Together.

To All You Guys: Be open and generous. You want to be treated with respect, so why not begin by respecting those who respond to your ads? You will be pleasantly surprised at the results. ✍

KODMUR, continued from page 11
pioneer was much more a part of myself than merely a part I played.

A good friend of mine has often told me that I try to pin too much on my disability, that it isn't the fundamental defining event in my life, or the hat rack on which I can hang all my problems. She is probably right, but the ripple effect has been enormous. These days there is much talk about cures for disabilities, but with all due respect to geneticists and to Christopher Reeve and his diamond-blue eyes, if I were magically cured tomorrow, my life would be the same, because it has thus far been constrained by both the social experience of disability and the morass of severe depression. I know I will have to find hope within myself once more, that no one can give me a prosthesis for what is temporarily missing from my head and heart.

I realize I may have started off life as a little disabled Jackie Robinson, but I also know I want a life that's lived on more than just the public stage. I want the freedom to be ordinary, even though, paradoxically, I know I might not ever be happy with such anonymity. Sometimes I tell myself that the world won't grant me this freedom, but I recognize, now, that I need to take greater responsibility for who I am, keeping in mind, however, the difference between responsibility and blame. Responsibility should motivate, while blame offers only paralysis, especially if I turn blame inward. The future, both for me and for others, needs to be built and fought and argued into existence. My depression of the last several years may indicate how tired I am of the struggle, but I know I must return to it somehow. I just don't want to go back alone. While my pioneering days are not over, I hope my solitude and isolation will soon be.

If any of what I have written resonates with you, if you too battle depression, ignore people who just drop in, exhorting you to cheer up; instead, find people to stay and fight at your side. Their deeds, their very presence, may do more to break depression's grip, to battle the Panic, than their words ever could. In the company of others, each little victory along the path to our futures will be that much more worthwhile. ✍

DANNY KODMUR is dramatically overeducated and underemployed. He lives near Berkeley, CA, where he is looking for a boyfriend.

A GUIDE TO CONTACT AD LISTINGS

How to Reply to a Coded Ad: Put your letter in an envelope, seal it, and put the A-T code # of the advertiser you are replying to in the top right corner of the envelope; if you know your A-T code #, put this (or your initials) in the bottom left corner; **do not put your return address on this envelope**; put this envelope, together with the correct reimbursement for forwarding, please, (see below) in another envelope. This outer envelope should have your return address: seal, address to A-T and mail! You may respond to as many coded ads as you wish, and put all the code-numbered envelopes in the one outer envelope to mail to us.

Content: We believe the best kind of ad is the one that gives the reader the most accurate idea of who you are. We therefore encourage ad length (but reserve the right to edit) and accurate statements of personal statistics such as age and weight. Bear in mind that A-T readers are likely to want to know whether you are disabled or nondisabled, so please include this information. Try to be as detailed as you can about yourself and your way of being and presentation in the world, because it very greatly helps both you and potential responders if they can gain a reasonable picture of you from the ad. ***We encourage changes and updates to ads!***

Editing Policy: Although ABLE-TOGETHER strives without judgment to encourage honest self-expression we are aware that many of our subscribers may feel depersonalized and objectified in response to certain personal contact ad material. Because of the importance A-T attaches to avoiding objectification and depersonalization in interpersonal relations, we may edit personal contact ads which seem to us to contain sexually overly explicit or overly fetishistic material.

Deadlines: ABLE-TOGETHER needs your ad copy by 5th March for Spring issue, 5th June for Summer issue, 5th September for Fall issue and 5th December for Winter issue. New, renewed or changed ads reaching us after these dates are not guaranteed to appear in the issue published at the beginning of the next month.

Postage: ABLE-TOGETHER does not seek to profit from forwarding replies to coded contact ads but we do ask that you send us full reimbursement for our postage costs in forwarding your reply to the advertiser:

- for US responses to US advertisers, this is a 32ct stamp;
- for US responses to Canada, this is a 46ct stamp;
- for US responses to advertisers outside the US or Canada, this is a $1 stamp;
- for overseas responders who do not have US stamps and wish to send a $1 bill, this will cover three replies within the US or two to Canada or one elsewhere; but please note that these rates are for minimum-weight letters; heavier items cost more to send, and when in doubt, please check at the post office.

Payment: Remittance of forwarding costs may be made to ABLE-TOGETHER in valid US postage stamps, in currency, or by personal check or money order drawn in US Dollars. Please, no international reply coupons or foreign currency checks for this purpose. All payments are sent to us at sender's risk. A-T does not accept responsibility for materials sent to us to be forwarded, and we reserve the right to destroy materials not accompanied by adequate reimbursement for forwarding costs.

PERSONAL CONTACTS INITIATED THROUGH ABLE-TOGETHER CONTACT AD LISTINGS ARE DONE SO ENTIRELY AT THE RISK AND ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED: WE ENCOURAGE **YOU** TO **MAKE SURE** YOU ARE DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO BE DOING, AND WITH THE PERSON YOU WANT TO BE DOING IT WITH; IF YOU DECIDE TO BE SEXUAL WITH SOMEONE YOU ARE VERY STRONGLY URGED **FIRST** TO CALL YOUR LOCAL AIDS/STD HOTLINE FOR ADVICE.

The A-T personal contact ads are divided into two sections. The BUDDY section is for advertisers who are not seeking contacts of a romantic or sexual nature. Respondents looking for contact that will lead to sex or romance should reply only to ads in the MORE THAN A BUDDY section.

Seeking

A BUDDY

CENTRAL FLORIDA. Former hotel manager from Washington DC and San Francisco area. Now retired in the sun with Mickey Mouse, and Bear, my companion golden retriever. Sensitive, caring, 48 yo, 5'8", 150 lb., and goodlooking, nonsmoker, light drinker (cheap date, drunk on half a bottle of champagne). Keep fit by working out at local wellness center 5 days a week. I am partially disabled from a prior brain tumor, but have remained whole in mind and spirit. I don't drive, but use a scooter to get around outside and maintain independence. I enjoy gardening, cooking, going out to eat, ice cream socials, Indian artifacts, and communing with nature. Keep my sense of humor sharp by watching hunmorous sitcom although enjoy reality of Touch by Angel. I value humor, kindness, honesty, and above all communication. If you poossess these qualities I would love to hear from you. *David Kenny, 510 Cranes Way #107, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701,* or ph: 407 339 2734.

INDIANA. 36 yo male, 5'11", 200#, hairy, goatee, thinning brn hair, gr eyes. I have hidden disabilities that include visual, visual perceptual, learning disabilities, along with very mild Ataxic CP. I am a graduate of Partners in Policy Making and am very active in the disabled community. My interests range from assistive technology, bowling, sports (on tv to wilder stuff. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1024,* or **E-mail: jpalmer2@hotmail.com**

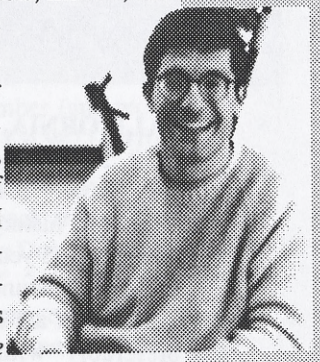
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS. GWM, 41 years old learning to come to terms with a congenital brain aneurysm—an AVM—which has left me without the full use of my left leg and essentially no use of my left arm and hand. I'm working with therapists and exercising with the hope to regain the use of most of my body. I also have to deal with panic attacks and the threat of seizures along with an inability to be aware of that which is on my left side (this is a cognitive not optical issue). All of these issues along with the fact that I must live back with my parents make thoughts of intimacy damn near impossible. If there is another gay man out there who may be dealing with any of these problems, I would love to hear from him and hear what he has been through. Until this hit me I was working as a Graphic Designer—an occupation which paid the rent and allowed for my frequent trips to Tower Records and an occasional visit to Italy. I'm looking for someone to talk about my injury experiences with and would like it if this developed into a friendship. I would love to be in a position to feel comfortable seeking someone for an intimate relationship at some point down the road, but not now. For now I am so unaware of my own physical experiences that sharing them with others is totally foreign to me. I also long for the day when I can hug a man with both arms and feel him with both hands. I've been told this will never happen by most of my doctors and therapists. I don't want to accept all of the "never"s thrown at me. Can someone be the proof of a light at the end of the tunnel for me? Or at the very least maybe I could work towards the light together with someone else—while you do the same struggle of your own. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1836,* or **E-mail: KURTC@ibm.net**

Why not send A-T a photo to be published with your ad?

TYNE & WEAR, UK. Hi, I'm a 34 year old GWM 5'10" contented disabled bear looking to make disabled bear (or other) friends. I'm a wheelchair user and a personal assistance user. I work full-time—which pays for my nights out clubbing—and spend the rest of the time keeping up with my pals. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1873,* or **E-mail: wheelbear@ukonline.co.uk**

CALIFORNIA. GWM 51, 5'6", 145#, blu, br, 'stache, 18 years hemiplegic wheelchair user, eager for So. Ca. friends, nondisabled or not. I am a former hotel manager and now do AIDS volunteer work. I enjoy life, lite-health cooking, dining, conversations, classical music, opera, movies, theaters, museums, etc...Drink wine but not into bars or scene, do not smoke or do drugs. Be discreet. *Tom, 1525 Appleton #302, Long Beach, CA 90802, ph: 562 436 2880.*

CALIFORNIA. Handsome, funny, cuddly and charismatic Jewish disabled guy wants to meet men ages 21-45, disabled or not, for correspondence, friendship, romance, or whatever happens. Short, bespectacled, hairy, and compact, with dark hair and eyes, I am equally comfortable with many different kinds of food, music, movies, theater, and people. Here is my photo; I would love to see a photo of you with your reply, but it isn't necessary. I am newly 34, but simultaneously feel much older and much younger; perhaps you feel the same way. Generally, I prefer people who are emotionally open, humorous, and compassionate, although none of these qualities rules out a healthy streak of sarcasm. I also hope to meet people who can accept and encompass my disability in its full context rather than singling it out for special attention. Get in touch and let's see what might develop. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #895,* or **E-mail: CyranoEB@yahoo.com**



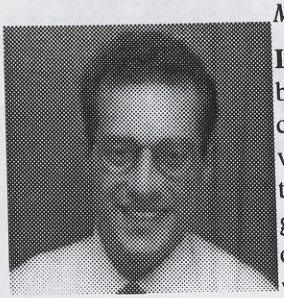
THE REAL THING. I'm a friendly, down-to-earth, 34 year-old GWM, looking for a longterm romantic relationship with a compatible guy. You share my love of movies, and might also be interested in theater, science fiction, history, politics, or psychology. I love to hug, kiss and cuddle with my man; you're the same way. I'm attractive, HIV-neg., a nonsmoker, 5'7", 135 lbs., moderately disabled—walk with crutches, go for walks in my cool new power 'chair. You are roughly 25-45, any race, attractive, intelligent, HIV-neg., also a nonsmoker. Local preferred, but—who knows! *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #013,* or **E-mail: sfshyguy@aol.com**

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. Charlie, 55, 6', 180 lbs, blond/blue, mild heart condition, seeking companion to enjoy each other's company; interests—conversation, movies, travel, quiet times. SS. Possible LTR. Please be sincere. No drugs. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1455.*

MY NAME IS MICHAEL. I am 45, 6', 210#. I am a right AK amputee. I have a lot of interests, including music, (alternative rock, classical, jazz, world), reading (novels and newspapers mostly), travel, eating out, movies, concerts and theater. I am looking to meet able-bodied men who are 37—48 years old, preferably, and who live in the Southern California area (or visit here regularly) for friendship and perhaps romance. My friends describe me as a fun-loving, interesting and sincere person and I am looking for same. If my being an amputee is a turn-on for you that is just fine by me but I would frankly prefer not to be contacted by amputee wannabes or those seeking phone or cyber sex. Please drop me a note at **Cybermyke1@aol.com** (please mention ABLE-TOGETHER in the subject line so I won't mistake it for a spam) or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #330.*

CALIFORNIA. GWM 61, weigh 225#, 5'8", very hirsute. I moved to LA from NYC after teaching American history in high school for more than 25 years. I have MS and am wheelchair-bound. I am loving and outgoing. I am looking for friendship, preferably with someone younger. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #436.*

CALIFORNIA. GWM 45, 5'7", 180#, legally disabled 1989 w. atypical facial pain & major depression. Average to good looks, short brown greying hair and hazel eyes. I am clean and honest and live on a limited income. I enjoy b/w vintage film and like to mountain bike to nearest coffee shop. I would like to get out of my apartment and see nature—perhaps travel and see your part of the world. It's much more fun when you can share life's experiences with someone. *David Martin, 203 Neds Way, Tiburon, CA 94920.*



LOS ANGELES/SoCAL. GWM 30, 5'6", 135 lbs, brn/brn, outgoing professional, interested in social causes, neuromuscular disorder since birth, use wheelchair, crutches; sincere, honest guy who likes to go swimming and sit out in the sun. Seek cute guy, disabled or nondisabled, who's interested in conversation, dinners, movies, sex and loving. Write with photo. *Replies with correct postage please to*

A-T #1518, or **E-mail: PETERnLA@aol.com**

SAN FRANCISCO. 5'7", 145 lbs., youthful Baby Boomer with exotic blend of Hispanic-Eurasian good looks, clean cut, black hair, brown eyes, heart-warming smile, silky-smooth skin, health-conscious, HIV-negative, post-polio and wears a left leg brace. Busy, active social and work life, but open to a whole range of new connections—preferably in the Bay Area and Northern California region—for potential boyfriends, casual dates, sex buddies, intimate friendships, or just good company to hang out with. Wants companions who are caring, validating, intellectually and sexually stimulating, fun-loving, down to earth, stable and easy going. Has a broad range of interests, including people, character study, movies, the theatre, dinners out, travel, sightseeing, camping, nudity in nature, collector car shows, flea markets and occasional dancing and nightlife, as well as writing, reading, politics, psycho-babble, sci-fi, penpals, gardening, some TV and long quiet lazy weekends shacked up with the right guy. Interested or at least curious? Let's meet over coffee and see what happens. Drop a note with phone number (and recent photo a plus) to: *Robby, POB 14104, San Francisco, CA 94114-4104.*

CALIFORNIA. Hi—I'm Bret, a tall, goofy Farm-boy type guy transplanted from the Midwest to San Francisco back in the 80's. Turned 40 this December 1998, Capricorn/Year of the Dog for anyone who is interested in that kind of stuff. SGWM, 6'3", 210, with dark hair and blue/green eyes, boyish face, usually clean shaven except on weekends when I can get a little scruffy. HIV-negative, but that isn't a requirement. Semi-disabled with ruptured/herniated discs, muscle and nerve damage in lower back and legs, has been progressing for twenty years, may get worse as time goes on. Have some limitations, but do what I can. Love trips to Disneyland, music, books, movies, Mystery Science Theater 3000, walks/hikes, crafts, lots of other things. More of a romantic, love to cuddle under the blankets when it's cold and raining out with a good (or cheesey) movie on the VCR and someone nice to hold. Looking for pen pals, friends, dates, LTR with other able or disabled man in San Francisco or anywhere. Also looking to start studying ASL again, and would like to hear from others who use ASL or have studied or like to study—maybe take courses together? Prefer guys between late twenties and late forties, N/S, N/D, if possible (but not mandatory). Kind of shy at first, but open, honest, friendly and funny once I get to know a person. Photo/Phone appreciated. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1667.*

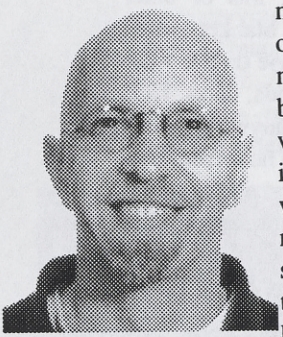
OAKLAND. Able GWM, 52, 6'4", 180#, open to meet new friends for conversation, local travel in my car, home cooked candlelight dinners, quality films and videos, wide range of music from romantic to

classical. All are welcome. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1811,* or **E-mail: compeace@concentric.net**

SAN DIEGO AREA. Shy GWM, post-polio with leg brace, younger looking 53, 5'11", 200lbs, hazel eyes, likes nude fun and SM/BD games indoors and out. Enjoy quiet evenings at home, dinner out, travel, etc. Interested in meeting guys, disabled or not, for friendship, pen pals, safe sex. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #137.*

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA. GWM 51, 5' 6", 155 lbs, polio survivor and cane user, iso black or dark-complexioned GM. Want to add zest to my life and having a man in my arms who truly wants to be there brings a sparkle to my eyes and a smile to my face. I lead an active and busy life, so when I stop, I'm tired. I'm looking for someone who is fairly quiet, gentle—shy ok—who desires to connect on a physical and emotional level ranging from occasional dates to sex buddy, boyfriends, soul-mates—let's let the connection between us decide where we go. I neither offer nor expect physical perfection, but hope for chemistry. I'm emotional, sometimes sad, but mostly level-headed and very stable: "walking the talk" is what I offer you, and hope to receive. Please call 415—621 2938 before 9 pm PDT, or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #1224.*

NE CALIFORNIA AREA. 50-something GWM seeking correspondence with all who reply. Goodlooking, so I've been told, gregarious/altruistic by nature/disposition. HIV-negative. Enjoy/use only safe sex practices. Live in High Desert. Clean shaven, shaven head—not skin head. 6'4", 210 lbs., looking for similar like-minded significant other candidates. *Micheal George Cordes, Post Office Box 1041, Bishop, CA 93515-1041.*



PLACE IN THE SUN. Fair-complected white jewish male, nondisabled, healthy, attractive and athletic 48 year old professional. I'm well kept and in good shape, a hairy, muscular 5'10"/165# with nice chest and arms, bald/shaved head, blond goatee. A beer or glass of wine with dinner, no smokes/drugs, HIV-neg. I am warm, caring, decent, stable, intelligent, honest and straightforward. Would like to hear from disabled or nondisabled man interested in good connection...intimate friendship...travel...dating...hanging out...sharing place in the sun. I like talking on the phone, cooking, laughing, hanging out, eating together, Seinfeld, Simpsons, fringe theater, movies, working out, physical affection. I like men who are understanding, adventurous, athletic-within-ability, 25-50. San Francisco/UK/beyond. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #252.*

CALIFORNIA. Hi! I'm a 41 yr old (dis)abled (cerebral palsy) w.m. Fully mobile, 5'8", 125 lbs., Br hair, Gr eyes. Looking for friendship and a possible partner and/or a l.t.r., (dis)abled or not, same age range preferred. Open to a variety of activities from travel to quiet evenings. HIV-negative. Please no "mind games", just honesty. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1827,* or **E-mail: kenefick@ix.netcom.com**

CALIFORNIA. I'm a middle-aged GWM, 5'10", 200 lbs., using crutches occasionally when my ankle flares up. I am seeking a young man, disabled or nondisabled, preferably under 40, for friendship/romance/possible relationship. My interests include classical music, movies, museums, dining out. *Michael, POB 4054, Berkeley, CA 94704.*

WASHINGTON DC AREA. Black male, hemiplegic on the left side, stroke survivor, 46 years, 29 inch waist, HIV-neg., smooth skin, shaved head, would like to explore my feelings for men disabled or nondisabled bisexual or gay. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1871.*

DC AREA. Abled GM, young 50, 5'1", 125 lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, 'stache, glasses. Smoker, light drinker. Interests—music, dancing, long walks, swimming, intelligent tv, old movies, quiet nights at home. Race/disability friendly, seek same, height-weight proportionate. Your photo gets mine. *Boxholder, POB 27, Lanham, MD 20703-0027.*

FLORIDA. GWM 43, 6', 200 lbs, br/br, nondisabled, in search of GWM 20-50 disabled who walks with crutches. I am an honest, caring, trustworthy male who is seeking to welcome new friends into my life. All correspondence will be answered. *Michael Kirnard, 1025 N. Thorpe Ave., Orange City, FL 32763.*

CHICAGO. White male, short, slim (5'6", 130 lbs.) have slight spinal curvature, orthopedic shoe with lift gives me slight limp. Would like to hear from local in-shape guys (a handicap is no excuse). I'm working on my abs! Chicago N. Side, N. Burbs, student long hair a plus. I'm substance free. 8-1-Birthday at Oak Street Beach? Foreign corrrespondents welcome. A good friend great smile mean a lot! Let's explore Chicago and its ethnic restaurants. possible trip to Palm Beach Fall 1999! *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #062.*

ILLINOIS. Nondisabled GWM 62, 6', 188#, blond, short beard, non-smoker, HIV-neg. Want to meet a monogamous partner with or without disabilities, especially in San Francisco, Ca. I'm affectionate, quiet, like

French food/wine, vitamins/herbs, felines, gardening, spirituality. *Harold R. Schuring, 300 N. State Street, #5718, Chicago, IL 60610,* or ph: 312 670 3507.

ILLINOIS. GWM 35, 170#, brown hair, grey eyes, HIV-negative, like fishing, camping, hiking, bowling, movies, dancing, travel and eating out. Looking for friendship or relationship. *John Nowack, 1536—4th Street Ct. E., Milan, IL 61624-3416,* or ph: 309 756 3743.

ILLINOIS. I'm 29, 6'1, 215, blk/brn, goodlooking C6 quad in chicago looking for a buddy who is nice, fit, able to encourage/challenge me physically, mentally, spiritually, in a positive way. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1439,* or **E-mail: Thomas20s@aol.com**

ILLINOIS. GWM, nondisabled, is attracted to and interested in corresponding with and meeting guys who wear leg braces, also guys wearing teeth braces. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #468,* or **E-mail: DTIRR@AOL.COM**

MARYLAND. GWM, mature, hairy, 6ft, blue/brown-gray, 205lbs. Life-long attraction to GMs with one leg shorter than the other or club foot or limp, also polio survivors. I am truthful, loving, monogamous and considerate. I like antiques, classical music & opera, cooking, travel, loving home in beautiful environment. My handicap is a short penis with small, mis-mated balls. Pen pals appreciated. Contact: *John, 1110 Fidler Lane #801, Silver Spring, MD 20910,* or ph. 301 589 1873.

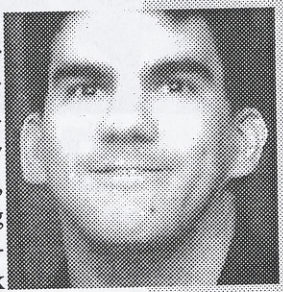
MASSACHUSSETTS. Gwm born 8/8/62, 5' 2", 185lbs, blue eyes, brown hair, mustache. I was born with a rare disability called *lymphatic vascular malformations.* Which means—1 *hemangioma:* a benign growth of rapidly dividing cells that form extra blood vessels; 2 *vascular malformation:* a permanent collection of abnormal capilliaries, veins, or lymphatics, occurring either as single channel type or in combination. So what does this mean for me? Well, I have a bigger left hand than normal, I am in constant pain all day and my right leg is affected by this and I can't do much walking; sometimes I use a cane. My interests are tv, music, hand-made crafts, photography, basketball, stamp collection, bank collection, swimming, bowling, playing cards and board games and many more things. If you are a nonsmoker, honest, trustworthy, loyal and caring, please send photo and phone. Looking for friends and possible relationship. *Bobby, 33 Merri Village, Merrimac, MA 01860,* ph: 978 346 4495, or **E-mail: rship33@aol.com**

MASSACHUSSETTS. I have been an amputee (right arm AE) for most of my life (car accident when I was 23). Being an amputee has

been a challenge but not a limitation. Learning to love my body has taken some time, but I'm there now and I have been trying to take good care of it by exercising regularly. As a result I'm in excellent physical condition—57, 5'11", 150 hard lbs, light brown hair, short beard, HIV-neg. I'm well educated and teach biology at a small college. My interests range from nature to sports cars. Living on Cape Cod all summer, I manage to spend a great deal of time on the beach and I love to sunbathe in the nude. Through this newsletter-magazine I have learned that there is much for me to share with both fellow amputees and those who are attracted to us. I'm interested in corresponding/meeting/visiting other upper-extremity amputees and "devotees". Let's enjoy each other. **E-mail: tfilteau@capecod.net** or write: *Ted, POB 1175, N. Eastham, MA 02651.*

MICHIGAN. Nondisabled GWM, 6', 180 lbs, would like to meet/correspond with guys who are amputees and/or wear dentures. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #799.*

NEW HAMPSHIRE. GWM, 50, 6', 185 lbs, reddish hair (some grey). blue eyes, big red mustache, nondisabled, honest, sincere, kind. I love the country and mountains; I collect and restore Victorian antiques, and have a business making custom crutches out of woods such as rosewood and ebony. I am attracted to men who are amputees. Looking to hear from an amputee, and from others abled and disabled, with a view to friendship, maybe more. Photo and phone # appreciated. *Ed Openshaw, POB 65, Rumney, NH 03266, ph: 603 786 9922.*



NEW JERSEY. GWM 35, 5'10", 170 lbs. "As Good As It Gets." Have had Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) for 19 years, for which I receive SSD. I enjoy hugs, affection, touching, holding and being held, watching TV and movies, driving, traveling, humor, gay events/meetings, talking on the 'phone, swimming pools, singing, and my cat, Brownie. I am seeking a loving friendship, and a long-term relationship. I am pretty liberal and have Christian beliefs. I don't smoke or drink and prefer you be the same. I prefer a good-looking man with a pretty hairy chest and arms, but clean shaven. I like men 21-48, HIV-neg., caring, honest, trustworthy, very affectionate, romantic, easygoing and sensitive. Can relocate for the right person. Please include recent photo. Call or write. *Jeff Woerner, POB 7049, Plainfield, NJ 07060-0799,* or ph: 908 769 3665. God bless you.

NEW JERSEY. Outgoing, energetic, dynamic, nondisabled 48 yo GWM, 5'10", HIV-neg., with brown hair and hazel eyes, seeks the

joy and pleasure of meeting a young, body-building, above-knee amputee for creative friendship. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1229.*

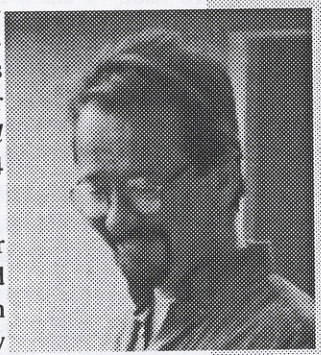
NORTHERN NEW JERSEY. Partially disabled, ambulatory, heavy GWM looking for LTR. Me: 50, 6 feet tall, 265 lbs, dark brown eyes, hair, beard and moustache, HIV-Negative. I can't go up or down stairs and I need help getting up from a chair and out of a car. Other than that, I'm cool. I have an excellent "up" attitude. I'm a lot of fun to be with. I love to laugh, cuddle and snuggle. I'm a first class cuddler (a real Teddy Bear!). I'm very tactile. I love to touch and be touched. Some of my interests are: classical music, museums, books, bookstores, shopping, restaurants, movies, videos and stamp collecting. You: abled GWM 32-55, HIV-Negative, build can be slim, average, wiry or muscular, in the Greater New Jersey/Manhattan Metropolitan Area. Some similar likes would be great, but not essential. Be strong for me, buddy. Letter and photo get mine. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #613.*

NYC. I'm Frank, 25 y.o., friendly, sensitive, vivacious, extroverted, and fun. One friend has described me as "Whitmanesque," which is flattering since Whitman is my poetic idol. I'm an unabashed Romantic, in the sense that I love nature, the expression of emotion, exercise of the imagination, and especially rebellion against social conventions. I'm an involved queer activist, a newspaper columnist, and graduate student. I have arthritis in most of my joints which causes noticable stiffness and occasional pain, but I do live very independently. I am looking to meet RELATIONSHIP oriented guys (mid 20's to mid 30's) who are similarly Romantic and extroverted. Let's explore the arts, read poetry, see films, go to museums and theater, cook, laugh, and LIVE. If all you want is sexual contact, I won't be interested. But, I will be interested if you're willing to invest the time to help something really wonderful develop. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1802,* or **E-mail: fs94@columbia.edu**

NEW YORK CITY. Hi, my name is Alan. A NYC native, I'm 32 years old, 6'2", 180 lbs., dark brown hair, brown eyes, very good looking. I have Body Dysmorphic Disorder, Obessive-Compulsive Disorder, very mild Tourette's Syndrome, Essential Tremor, and I am recovering from alcoholism. I am a graduate student in museum studies/art history and have two other art-related degrees. I work as an art and antiques dealer. I collect books and ephemera and enjoy the flea

market, thrift shops and museums. I'm intreested in disability issues and am a volunteer with the National Lesch-Nyhan Disease Registry. I'm not very interested in movies and TV. I am seeking a goodlooking, intelligent, disabled or nondisabled M up to 39 years old. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1553,* or ph: 212 989 1724.

NEW YORK. Cuddly GWM 57, 5'10", 175#, HIV-neg., short dark brown hair, gray-trimmed beard, hairy chest, arms and legs, masculine, down to earth, attractive, professional. I have a moderate case of Tourette's Syndrome, which causes vocalizations and tics. However I have enough control over the vocalizations that I can go to the theater and enjoy most of what life has to offer. Besides the TS, I'm slightly disabled by spondylolisthesis. I can't run a marathon, but I can still get around almost as well as anyone else. In addition I wear diapers for mild incontinence and a breathing mask when I sleep for a mild case of sleep apnea. I know that some guys are into the handicapped. That's fine. You can enjoy my disabilities and abilities. Anything goes that is safe and mutually agreeable. Let's get together and explore the possibilities whether it be for friendship, an erotic interlude, or a long-term relationship. *Don, POB 885, General Post Office, Brooklyn, NY 11202,* or ph: 718 624 5029, or **E-mail: brooklyn@prodigy.net**



NEW YORK. My name is Tom. I am 44 year old male. I am 5'5", 138 lbs., brown hair and goatee. I have my own business and am also an exhibiting artist in the US and Japan. Recently I had a one person show in New York and am preparing for another in August. I m a friendly and caring individual who is looking for other disabled persons who want friendship, companionship and love. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting together. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1880,* or **E-mail: TShnei554@aol.com**

WANNA BITE? Groovy 20-something Gay Asian bilateral amputee (b/k), 110 lb., seeks other sexy, differently-desirable men for friendships, mutual support, and minor pleasures of life. I'm clever and creative with a wacky sense of humor. I like matinees, cultural cuisine, flea markets, 80s series *Wonder Woman,* sensual massages and hip-hop music. No MSG (Maniacal Self-serving Gorilla). *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1788* or leave message at voice-mail only for Donald: 917 826 1710.

NEW YORK CITY. GWM, nondisabled, 40, 185, 6', very handsome with classic Mediterranean good looks, clean shaven, masculine, intelligent professional, muscular, gym-fit, HIV-neg., sensitive,

stable, affectionate, easygoing and emotionally secure. For as long as I can remember I have always been strongly attracted to physically "different" types of guys. Looking to meet men to explore safe mutual sexual good times and more. Call 212 595 5755 or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #287.*

NEW YORK. Hi! My name is Doug, a GWM 49, 5'11", 165-170 lbs, HIV-, with very slight cerebral palsy. I'm looking for a guy with or without a disability in age range 35-50. After work I'm into the performing arts, concerts, ballets, opera, lectures, and so on. I do not let my handicap keep me from doing the things I like or want to do but I want to meet the right guy to fill the other void in my life. Please be disease-free and a non-smoker. If you are interested send 'phone and photo to: *POB 275, Bronx, NY 10461.*

NEW YORK. GWM, 30 y/o, with Muscular Dystrophy, motorized wc user. I am 5'5", 150#, dark brown hair, brown eyes, Italian-American (which means I'm hairy). Starting grad school in Sept 1999 to become a guidance counselor. I love dining out, listening to disco music (yes, disco), & shopping. I'm heavily involved in disability activism/politics. I didlike bars/clubs. Looking to meet someone 25-40 y/o, disabled or not. You are humorous, optimistic, non-conformist, simplistic, considerate, and don't drink or use drugs. Seeking replies from NYC & Long Island. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #161,* or **E-mail: atrocchia@webtv.net**

NEW YORK. GWM, 44, 5'11", 155 lbs, good youthful muscular looks, swimmer's body, brown hair, hazel eyes, multilingual, nondisabled; interested in travel, reading, music from opera to house, and cooking; seeking disabled friend, 25-45,—especially if you are Arab, Indian or Latino. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #278.*

NEW YORK. Goodlooking GWM 40, nondisabled. I work in the arts and travel frequently. I am looking for disabled male friends for fun and whatever that may lead to. Guys ages 20-50 - perhaps with wheelchair, braces, post-polio - all welcomed. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #384.*

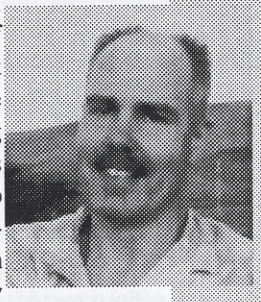
NEW YORK. Attractive, nondisabled w/m with Daddy Bear looks and attitude, 50 yrs., 6', 275 lbs, mostly white beard and moustache, close-cropped hair, hairy body, piercings and tats, and the imagination to go beyond a partner's physical limitations. Long time disability activist interested in meeting men with a wide range of disabilities/differences. Enjoy guys comfortable with the idea that I could be attracted to them and their disabilities. But also love exchanging thoughts with guys new to being an object of desire. Got a long-term lover, but still seeking like-minded guys who I can share ideas, fantasies, fetish-

es, and yes, some rewarding one-on-one contacts with. Non-sexual interests include writing, theatre, costume design, crafts, music (Broadway to Bach, but little Rock). A body is a terrible thing to waste. Let's not be putt off by our differences, let's revel in them!. Call Max at 718 852 1960 or **E-mail: BKBearMax@aol.com** or *replies with correct postage please to A-T #919.*

NORTH CAROLINA. GWM 33, blond hair, blue eyes, nondisabled, iso GWM 30—50 disabled, professional for friendship/relationship. Prefer chair user or lower extremity disability but open to all. Southerner who enjoys travel, going out or quiet times at home. Looking for a caring, honest, open man willing to explore life. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1601.*

I LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTH CAROLINA. Nondisabled male, 62, 6'1", 220 lbs, gray hair, hazel eyes, hairy chest; I'm attracted to disabled men; I'm retired and travel a great deal, and would love to hear from you wherever you are. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #508.*

NORTH DAKOTA. Walt here, and I'm still lost out on the Dakota prairie. I was hatched here in 1952, but escaped in 1970 and went to college in L.A. and Seattle. Most of the '70s were spent globetrotting with a gospel (sort of)-jazz/rock band. My MS surfaced while I was on the road in Europe back in 1973. After a year off, touring resumed until health said "no more." Following careers from graphics designer to public relations, I ended up back in ND. Although health keeps me fairly sedentary, politics and disability issues keep me active. I am now a freelance writer for various periodicals, and my book, "I've Fallen and I *Still* Can't Get Up," a commentary on disability, will be released next summer by Champion Press, Beverly Hills. When occasionally not in the wheelchair, I stand at 5'9" and tip the scale at 160#. Obviously, my salt and pepper crew cut is fast becoming history, but I do sport a trimmed 'stache. Despite growing up in an evangelical-fundamentalist home, my spiritual journey has taken me elsewhere. Interests exclude dope, tobacco, too much booze, and "political correctness;" interests include politics, music from opera to Elton, intelligent conversation and meeting someone of like mind. If you connect with any of the above, let's communicate: *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1295* or **E-mail: wdudley@pop.ctctel.com**



CLEVELAND, OHIO. GWM born 1941, 5' 8", 140#, brown/blue; diagnosis—MS; currently attempting to get better control of the following symptoms: walking difficul-

ty, bladder and sexual dysfunction; personal interests: history, especially of Cleveland/Northern Ohio & Great Lakes areas, movies, trains, transit, historic preservation, naturism, gay male erotica. I am back in my home town after a career elsewhere, on extended medical leave prior to retirement. Always willing to hear from A-T subscribers in NE Ohio or visitors to our area. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #617.*

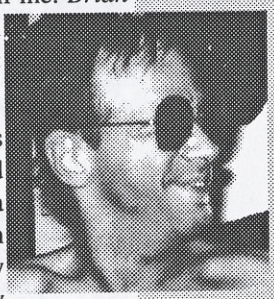
LOOKIN' FOR MY SOUL MATE... Oregon. Hi, I'm a groovy personality with an awakening soul. My name is John, I'm 30, 5'4", 150#, and love to stay physically active. I'm pretty high functioning with an incomplete T-12 spinal cord injury of 10 years. I love being outdoors, boating, bicycling, music, travel, metaphysics and trying to find the "right" colors and plants for the house. I'm looking to talk with other guys, disabled and gay, around the country. I'm also looking to meet a swell guy (disabled or non) prefer under 35 and close to Portland for friendship and a long term relationship. Some things I appreciate in other guys are a lively sense of humor, curiosity, optimism and a sense of adventure. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1724,* or **E-mail: Mupper24@aol.com**

SEEKING COMPANIONSHIP. Gay Jewish Disabled White Male 51, 5'6", seeks GWM friend ages 40 to 60 (or thereabouts) for companionship/relationship. Intelligent, active in community affairs, disability and gay rights, attuned to progressive politics, and work in professional position. Have blond silky hair, trimmed gray beard, moderately hairy chest. Interests include reading, museums, travel, serious movies, international affairs, politics and photography. Enjoy country-western and folk music and dancing. Can do modified form of two-step couple dancing and enjoy traditional East European, Balkan, and Israeli music and dancing. Am hard of hearing and have Cerebral Palsy. Use hearing aids and use cane to assist in mobility. Cannot drive, but can use regular public transportation to get around independently. Enjoy attending folk music concerts with progressive political bent that are interpreted in American Sign Language. Non-smoker. No drugs. Knowledge of ASL, or willingness to learn, a plus. Alan. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1762.*

PENNSYLVANIA. GWM (8/5/55), sincere, warm, caring, intelligent, humorous, can be shy, Leo, others tell me I'm a handsome bear, dark hair, beard/'stache, blue eyes, hairy back-butt-legs, person with a disability, power wheelchair user, HIV-neg., the fixed-

income thing. I seek friendships and possibly more, mutual support, hugs, kissing, safe times. I enjoy music, computers, surfing the Internet, E-mail, videos, houseplants, volunteering, hanging out on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania & at their botanical garden & bio-pond, and appreciating the great view from my secure 19th floor apartment. I do not smoke and don't use drugs and have no interest in sports. *Clark WF, 3901 Market St. #1913, Philadelphia, pA 19104-3131,* or **E-mail: clarkwf@ix.netcom.com** or **clarkwf@juno.com**

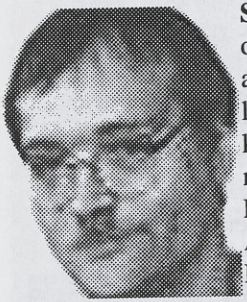
PENNSYLVANIA. Attractive, well-educated GWM 26, 5'8", 125, brown hair and eyes, neat and clean. I was born with spastic athetoid cerebral palsy which affects my speech, gait and fine motor control. I am ambulatory, but use a power wheelchair for distance. I enjoy computers, the Internet, AOL, travel, theater, Disability Issues and Rights, reading, meeting new people and sex. I am an active member of both ADAPT and the Philadelphia Rowing Program for the Disabled. Sexually, I am extremely open-minded, tend to prefer more of a submissive role, and have a strong interest in other men who have disabilities. Please feel free to write, call or E-mail me. *Brian Peaceman, 150 N Bethlehem Pike #C-110, Ambler, PA 19002,* ph: 215 540 0411 before 10pm EST, or **E-mail: BPeaceman@aol.com**



PENNSYLVANIA. GWM 39 years old with a swimmer's build, 5' 9", 125 lbs, with cerebral palsy. I am masculine and cute. I have my college degree in theatre. I already wrote a play and it was staged at Penn State University in the main campus. Believe me - I don't let my disability stand in my way of anything or anybody. I live on my own, one hour away from Philadelphia and one hour away from New York City. My interests are the theatre, working out at the gym, dancing, going to the beach in the summer, laying in the sun to get a dark tan without a tan line, partying, going to see male dancers, and traveling. Believe me, I do everything and anything. I am looking for someone to be with to enjoy lifeand to have a blast with. And...Hey, is there any guy out there who wants to take a vacation? Please contact me if you do. I was thinking about going to one of the islands, just lay out on the beach in our bikinis and look at the view. *Bill Lasch, 1101 Seneca Street #208, Bethlehem, PA 18015, ph: 610 866 4679.*

PENNSYLVANIA. Good guy, 39, 5'11", 165#, brown hair and eyes, good-looking, masculine, solid, nondisabled. Personable, casual, unconventional, active, affectionate. Enjoy music, the outdoors, movies, sports, exercise, good food, good conversation, good books, and good times. Have positive, sincere, lifelong interest in men with disablitlies, particularly upper extremity amputees and survivors of SCI, polio or spina bifida who use crutches. Maybe it's the athletic

aspect of the upper body, my thoughts on intimacy and disability, discovering him whom others may overlook…Now I am embracing this interest and seeing where it leads me: I'm more than happy to explore and explain with the right guy. I hope to offer a high degree of awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to a disabled man to see what we can enjoy or build together. Have dated a few men with disabilities and all was ok. If you like what you hear and the above seems to fit, please be in touch. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1428 or ph: 215 829 9650.*



SOUTH DAKOTA. Hello, my name is Tom, I'm a 38 year old GWM, 5' 11", 155lbs, brown, blue, quadriplegic from auto acc. in 1984. Write poetry occasionly, nothing published yet. I'm into wheelchair Olympics. My cute puppy keeps me happy, Gordon Setter. I'm an x sailor and into mechanics on Helicopters. I smoke and don't care if you do. Prefer any friends to be pen-pals first, then looking for LTR. Age is no preference but must be honest and open to advice. Looking for friends to spend time with same interests, ie—outdoors, camping, fishing, watching movies by a fire, dining out, most music from the 70s—80s. Sincere, dependable. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #412,* or **E-mail: TBak301048@aol.com**

TX STUD . GWM, good looking, 32, 5'11", 165lb, short brown hair, green eyes, clean cut, muscular, masculine, frat type. L2 incomplete para, as of 8 months ago. My situation is unique in that my spinal cord is intact and uninjured. I had a traumatic injury which resulted in losing 33 pints of blood. So, I have all feeling and sensation as well as continuing return. Although I currently use a wheelchair, I am totally independent. I am smart (degreed professional), funny, witty, sarcastic, sweet, honest, and romantic. I love to travel, like sports, like to work hard and get dirty, but I also clean up well. I left the city to live in the country where it is peaceful, which allows me to keep focused while working hard at physical therapy. I would like to meet guys of all ages disabled or not for fun, friendship, companionship, or even sex! I am a great guy who is very adaptable and a lot of fun to be around. Someone will be lucky to catch me! *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1882.*

TEXAS FARM BOY. Country kid seeks LTR with a down-to-earth <u>abled</u> country or city boy. GWM 60, good natured, physically fit, college educated and very masculine. 5'10", 170#, blond hair, blue eyes, hairy, fair complexion, HIV-neg., and no drugs ever. I consider myself highly spirited, physically active, virile, very sensual/sexual and affectionate. My disabili-

ty is very moderate and invisible. I have a congenital eye problem and wear glasses for good correction. Also have a low-back problem L-4/L-5 that prevents heavy lifting. Otherwise in excellent health and good shape. My friends say I'm a bit rough around the edges, unique and unconventional—yet always the gentleman. I am seeking a younger man, 30 to 45, possibly 50, attractive, slender/very trim, who is comfortable with self, respectful, very considerate, active, not consumed by material possessions, loyal honest and very sensual/sexual, HIV-neg. and drug-free, and seeking a sincere relationship based on love and trust with an older man. I am very willing to relocate for the right person. Your photo and 'phone # gets mine. *J. D., POB 221, Royse City, TX 75189.*

TEXAS. Bisexual white man, date of birth April 1942, brown gray hair, hazel eyes, 5' 8", 180 lbs, HIV-neg. I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder followed by persistent personality change and Sleep Disorder. I also have Sugar Diabetes Mellitus, Type II. I want what is hard to find: an emotional and sexual relationship with a Bi. man and a Bi. woman/ a Bi. man and myself to share two Bi. women, and each other together. Full knowledge and consent of all. First get to know each other in friendship and then let it happen. (Nickname: Comanche.) Please write to: *J.C., 2500 Nonesuch Road #7D, Abilene, TX 79606-1512.*

TEXAS. Hi, I'm Joey, 30, 5'5", medium build, 160 lbs., Hispanic. I was born with Spina Bifida. I use crutches to get around and I'm very active and do not let my disability slow me down. I enjoy tennis, basketball, hockey, traveling, museums, opera. I like active guys younger than me. I welcome correspondence from able or disabled guys. I like to just hang out or talk on the phone. My favorite books are novels by Anne Rice. My favorite foods are Mexican and Chinese. I enjoy walks in the park or weekends at the lake camping, gazing at the stars. I would like to hear from guys who have to wear diapers. Pen pals welcome. Please write with mailing address and preferably photo. Joey A. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1883.*

TEXAS. Clean cut, GWM, 40s, 5'10", 165, able bodied, very interested in meeting new friends. I often find myself attracted to guys with physical disabilities. I travel a great deal (especially So. California and major cities), so location isn't as important as a sharing of mutual interests. I enjoy the performing and fine arts, classical music, architectural history, good food/wine with an interesting guy. My favorite countries to visit are France and Italy, but am open to new experiences. Let's have dinner (please be a non-smoker), explore our interests and perhaps plan an adventure! I look forward to hearing from you soon. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1420,* or **E-mail: Brooks346@aol.com**

VIRGINIA. I am a 53 year old disabled person, in a wheelchair, but not confined to it, due to diabetic neuropathy. All toes on both feet have been amputated. Had CVA in August—health now improving since I have become a vegetarian. My interests are Art—I paint; History—ancient to European renaissance; Music—any kind other than Jazz and Hard Rock. I am 6'2", dirty blond/hazel, clean shaven, and my weight fluctuates between 250# and 300#. I like to hug and hold and give excellent full body massages. I am an avid movie buff and love animals. I am looking for a large, hairy, gentle giant type to visit me and look forward to an LTR. I love Europeans and am a confirmed Francophile. Canadian and Swiss also a definite plus, as is lumberjack type. *Replies with correct postage please to A-T #1543, or ph: 540-342 5859 between 9am and 11pm Eastern time.*

VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA. GWM 47, 5' 10" tall, 180#, brown hair and eyes, very hairy body, solid, nondisabled. Wishes to meet amputees for friendship and possibly more. *Michael Allen, POB 19435, Alexandria, VA 22320.*

Why not send A-T a photo to be published with your ad?

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA. Harold, a 49 y.o. Wheelchair user (SCI). 5'6" Well-built. Good-looking, affectionate and sexy. Professional background. I am very independent. Enjoy travelling, scuba diving, movies, dinners out. I drive. Would enjoy corresponding with guys who are disabled/nondisabled who share similar values with a view to friendship. Cheers & I hope to hear from you soon. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1305,* or **E-mail: harold@connexus.net.au**

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA. Richard, 43 yo architect. I have Spinal Muscular Atrophy (Kugelberg and Welanders Syndrome) and would particularly like to correspond with other guys with this or similar neuro-muscular conditions—though anyone else is also welcome to write. I am still ambulant for most of the time, though becoming increasingly reliant on my wheelchair (manual, ultra light) for shopping and "long-haul" activities. My interests include theatre, opera, classical music (particularly choral—I sing!) and computers. I still socialize a bit on the gay scene here, though I often find access and standing around quite difficult. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1665* or **E-mail: richpond@bigpond.com**

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. Hi guys!! This is a new kid on the block, who I am disabled. But I have a good lifestyle and live alone. Happy as a single gay man. Speaking with my disabilities, these are: Moderate-severe Athetoid Cerebral Palsy and profoundly hearing loss, both since I was born. Now I'm 20 years old, healthy (non-smoker, non-drinker

and drug-free), honest, clean-shaven, 170cm (about) 65kgs, blond hair and brown eyes, who also have a slim body. I am living in a quiet area in Sydney's West. I am a college (TAFE) student, studying Information Technology Certificate IV (Multimedia). I can walk, however only limited distance. Communicate to you that I am using my hearing aids. What sort of guy you like? you may ask me. Well—I don't jusge about age range and appearances. It is important to judge what is a man's personality. Able-bodied or disabled guys is fine with me. Hobbies and interests? Love nature, reading, quiet nights, enjoying bushwalking, photography, landscapes, computers and new things. Love to hear from you anywhere in the world. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1725,* or **E-mail: marchibald@one.net.au**

OXFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND. Friendly, intelligent, attractive nondisabled guy, 50ish but look much younger, iso disabled guys as penpals and friends. I like exchanging ideas and feelings, like kisses, cuddles and massage, want to make you happy. Do write. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1592.*

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND. Good looking, fit, active wheelchair-user, 28, looking to explore and have physcial fun with other sexy looking wheelchair bound guys, hobbies include cycling, weight-training, countryside, cinema, enjoying life. *14 Abbey Lane, Edinburgh, EH8 8HH, UK* or ph: [UK] - [0]131 468 0490

PERTH, SCOTLAND. My name is Peter, I'm 43, heavy build, brown hair and clean shaven. Disability due to SCI last year. I'm mobile with walking sticks and my car helps too. My interests are varied and include reading, music, films. I'm looking for guys, disabled or able-bodied, for friendship and perhaps, with the right person, possibly more. I look forward to hearing from you. *Replies with correct international postage please to A-T #1774,* or **E-mail: barking91@hotmail.com**

SMILE, PLEASE!

When submitting your ad, we encourage you to send a photo of yourself to be printed with it. Remember, though: Our printing budget does not permit reproduction of the highest quality, so if your photo is poor quality to begin with, you're liable to be disappointed with what you see. Oh, and one more thing: ***Smile!*** It really helps.

BULLETIN BOARD

Two ABLE-TOGETHER yellow flyers are stapled into this issue of the magazine: please pull them out and keep to pass on to someone who might like to know about A-T!

!!A-T MAGAZINE IS AVAILABLE ON MAC DISKETTE FOR BLIND/VISUALLY-IMPAIRED READERS!!

Please get in touch with A-T if you want to receive this issue of the magazine on floppy disk

$$ HELP WANTED $$

A-T, Inc. is looking for a self-motivating grantwriter to obtain the funding we need to extend the organization's services. S/he will research sources of funds and work with the executive director in collecting data for writing grants. Grantwriter's remuneration will be written into the grant(s) and will be contingent upon receipt of grant(s). Good resume-building opportunity.
Call Peter Geiger on # 415 522 9091

SEXUALITY BOOKLET

Innovative booklet, written for and by spinal cord injured gay bisexual men, directed at both the newly- and the not-so-newly injured.

Price: **£6** UK; **£8.50** everywhere else (overseas airmail)
specify gay men's booklet

Order From: Spinal Injuries Association, 76 St. James's Lane
London N10 3DF, UK, ph: 011 44 [0]181-444-2121

BULLETIN BOARD

Differently Abled

is a supportive social group for nonheterosexual men and women with and without disabilities.
ADELAIDE-SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Call Noel on 08–8269 4678 for monthly schedule
POB 113, Mitcham, SA 5062, AUSTRALIA

DISABLED PEN FRIENDS SERVICE

for all ages, abilities and sexualities, nondisabled friends and family
POB 42, Newton Le Willows, WA3 2FF, UK
CALL: Bill Naismith # [UK] 0850 491 131

PASSING TWICE

a newsletter for gay/lesbian stutterers.
For more info, write to:
BARRY YEOMAN, 918 BURCH AVENUE, DURHAM, NC 27701

SAN FRANCISCO SUPPORTIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUP

for gay/bisexual men with physical disabilities
evening meetings weekly at
NEW LEAF, 1853 Market St., SF
call David Indest on 415 626 7000 x 412 for details

ABLED QUEER, INC.

accessibility to queer culture for disabled gay men & lesbians supporting abled companions & promoting understanding
James Fulton, 1517B Missouri, Houston, TX 77006
phone: 713 523 1332 or email: james_e@iah.com

The **Center for Disability Rights** in **Rochester, New York** has begun monthly meetings of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered persons with disabilities. The Center is located at **41 Backus Street, Rochester, NY 14608**. The group will get together from **5:00 PM—8:00 PM every third Wednesday of the month**. Call **Bruce Darling** or **Susan Stahl** on **716 647-9257**

ABLE-TOGETHER *Magazine*

is in its **sixth year** of publication. A-T is mailed to subscribers across the globe in January, April, July, and October and is sold at gay/progressive bookstores.

Editor **Bob Guter**, an amputee since age six, examines the impact of disability on men's lives and relationships.

A-T Magazine *is* its subscribers—who contribute letters, poems, opinions, artwork, articles and bulletin-board items to the magazine, and help with outreach locally.

A-T ONLINE

is an email-based mailing-list discussion group... Post messages to the list and get feedback within 24 hours on the topics that interest YOU

Cafe A-T

meets ten times a year in a fully accessible Cafe in San Francisco's Castro district...out-of-town visitors especially welcome...BE SEEN HAVING A GOOD TIME WITH OTHER DISABLED/NONDISABLED MEN

Buddy Program

Are you looking for a friend JUST LIKE YOU?
Someone with a disability JUST LIKE YOURS?
A buddy just to hang out with.
Someone to reflect your reality,
to compare notes with,
share tribulations and successes,
show each other how it's done.
Whether yours is a recent
or not-so-recent injury or disability,
ABLE-TOGETHER
may well be able to show you
THERE'S SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

ABLE-TOGETHER, Inc.

a California Public Benefit Corporation
exempt from federal taxes under Section 501 (c) iii of the IRS Code

POB 460053, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA
VOICE MAIL US: 415 522 9091 VOICE MAIL UK: 01453 832782
INTERNET: http://www.well.com/user/blaine/abletog.html